

ARE WE TRULY
UNKNOWN?

Are We Truly Unknown?

DAKOTA FRANDSEN



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Introduction to Are We Truly Unknown? Transcripts

Welcome to the official audio transcript collection for ***Are We Truly Unknown?***, a deeply personal, raw, and powerfully motivational podcast produced exclusively by the Bald and Bonkers Network LLC. This series is more than just a collection of recordings; it is an open invitation into the unmasked reality of its host, Dakota Frandsen. Now streaming across all major platforms, including Spotify, Amazon Music, and Apple Podcasts (iTunes), *Are We Truly Unknown?* chronicles a necessary and difficult

metamorphosis, inviting listeners to face their own hidden truths alongside the host.

From the Strange to the Self: The Specialist's Metamorphosis

For sixteen years, the global audience knew Dakota Frandsen as "The Specialist of the Strange." This formidable persona was synonymous with high-stakes paranormal investigation, meticulous cosmic research, and high-profile collaborations with A-list celebrities and media outlets. He was a commanding, seemingly impenetrable figure who hunted the supernatural.

However, this podcast marks a definitive, vulnerable, and courageous shift. ***Are We Truly Unknown?*** strategically strips away the supernatural armor to confront a much more universal and, arguably, terrifying earthly reality: **the modern human condition.** The series delves into the crushing weight of the modern loneliness epidemic and the haunting, pervasive possibility that we do not truly know the people

around us—or, most unsettlingly, even ourselves. It is a journey from chasing ghosts to facing the demons within.

Core Themes: Unpacking the Six Profound Episodes

Throughout these six profound and often harrowing episodes, Dakota meticulously guides listeners through the darkest, most transformative hours of his life. He shares the painful process of unearthing hard-won lessons in survival, resilience, and the relentless pursuit of authentic connection. The transcripts document the key psychological turning points and realizations that fundamentally altered his life:

- **The Weight of the Mask:** This theme explores the deep psychological architecture behind Dakota's formidable paranormal persona. He details how "The Specialist" was not a choice, but a meticulously constructed psychological shield forged in the crucible of sur-

vival—a defense mechanism designed to endure severe childhood abuse and cope with the devastating, profound loss of his beloved grandfather.

- **The Olivia Paradox:** Listeners are introduced to Olivia, a mysterious and profound vision of a young blonde girl. This apparition appeared to a twelve-year-old Dakota in his darkest hour, saving him from a desperate attempt to end his own life while hiding in a bedroom closet. The transcripts explore the complex nature of this experience and its lasting impact.
- **The Search for a Star Family:** Dakota delves into the decades-long ripple effect of the Olivia Paradox. His desperate, lifelong search for Olivia's enigmatic mother became an all-consuming, high-stakes obsession, tragically turning romantic relationships into impossible auditions for a pre-determined role, ultimately sabotaging his own happiness and sense of self-worth.

- **Satellites vs. Lifelines:**

Through intense, unflinching therapy and self-examination, Dakota shares a pivotal, life-changing realization about the nature of healthy human connection. He illuminates the critical difference between **satellites**—romantic partners who should be cherished, guiding lights that enhance the journey—and **lifelines**—objects gripped in desperate, drowning fear that suffocate both individuals.

- **The Death of the Specialist:**

The transcripts document the conscious, deliberate, and metaphorical execution of Dakota's longstanding paranormal alter-ego. This act was a necessary sacrifice, allowing him to finally step out of the deep shadows of his past and courageously fight for a real, grounded future with the woman he loves, whom he calls his "Starlight Angel."

A Journey Toward True

Connection: A Raw Call to Action

Dakota's story is emphatically not a tragedy; it is a powerful, uncompromising testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the fact that unconditional love exists even in our absolute darkest, coldest, and most isolated days.

The journey documented in these transcripts is global and deeply personal: from harrowing, near-death hospital stays in China that unexpectedly served to rekindle his lost will to live, to the confronting isolation brought on by the rapid acceleration of modern technology and the rise of artificial intelligence.

Dakota's narrative serves as a raw, urgent call to action. He challenges every listener and reader to fundamentally stop relying on artificial, fleeting connections, to drop their performative armor, and to boldly ask the most defining question of our time: ***Are we truly unknown, or are we just too scared to put in the authentic effort to truly live?***

A Critical Note to the Reader:

Please be aware that these transcripts contain raw, unfiltered, and detailed discussions of severe trauma, sustained childhood abuse, and suicidal ideation. Reader discretion is strongly advised.

If you or someone you know is struggling with mental health challenges, please know that you do not have to fight the dark alone. Dakota has provided a comprehensive international resource and hotline registry, accessible directly through the episode links, to ensure everyone can find the support they need.

Episode 1

Meet Dakota

Hello everyone. It's about time we've met. My name is Dakota Frandsen. Some of you may know me. Some of you may have heard of me. Chances are those of you have heard of me, heard the wrong information. And the rest of you are just confused about who the hell is this crazy bald guy. All fair points. But whatever it is that brought you to listening to this show, that does not matter because this show its purpose is to discuss some things. I feel that in our rapidly, rapidly changing world, we are forgetting in our so-called explorations to benefit ourselves, to better our-

selves, even just to handle the noise, to not feel so overwhelmed by the uncertainty of tomorrow. our own. We lose sight of things that are truly important.

So, for those of you who never heard of me, let me introduce myself proper. My name is, like I said, Dakota Frandsen. Some people know me as The Specialist of the Strange. That title, admittedly, started out as a joke. But it became something that I wore with honor for 16 years now, or in fact, just coming up on my 16th anniversary of starting this later this month at the time I am recording this message. I have been involved publicly within supernatural circles. I have done radio interviews, podcasts. I've been involved in TV, movies, books, video games, music. I've gotten to brush up with some A-list celebrities, gotten to collaborate with some of the biggest names out in the field, and you want to know something that just cannot escape my mind as of late: how much none of that actually matters.

You see, we see all the time on social media the push for likes or follows, the constant pressure to live stream whatever content you desire, yet constantly dance around community guidelines to avoid offending people. Now, don't get me wrong, some of those community guidelines are there for a very solid purpose, and there's certain things that should not be distributed. But when it comes to addressing what is real, what is important, what is actually needing to be addressed, those same community guidelines are often twisted in favor of those who the truth makes uncomfortable.

And right now, the fact that humanity itself feels so unknown to us. Even though for thousands upon thousands of human history, our very evolutionary biology, no matter what variation of human evolution theories you subscribe to, there is one common factor across all of them, and that is the ability to collaborate and work together. That is widely believed, widely validated by some of the most brilliant minds on this planet as to how

the modern human took shape. And to some level, we achieved a greater interconnectedness than ever thought possible, perhaps for the first time in human history. Right now, you could be my neighbors next door wondering what the hell I'm talking about, while simultaneously you could be in Tokyo enjoying a bath. Or perhaps one of you're one of the friends from Scotland and Ireland wondering what the hell is that crazy Dakota up to. There's a beauty in that that we can have heartfelt conversations with people we would otherwise may never know have known existed in the first place. There is a beauty behind that.

But yet the fact still remains that we are facing what is considered to be the loneliness epidemic. Can you truly say you know your neighbors, your partners, your lovers, your siblings, your family? Can you truly say you know them in and out? Certainly makes you think, doesn't it? Now, you may be someone who says, "Oh, yeah, I know my brother. He does blah, blah, blah, blah, blah." But do you?

What about your best friend? Do you know if right now they are sitting in silence pondering the darkest thoughts a human being could ever face, compounded by the simple notion that they don't want to bother anybody else?

Take a standup comic for example. Let's go with Robin Williams. Everybody loves Robin Williams. How many of you can truly look back on some of the jokes he made knowing his particular style that he got his start within improv? How many of you can look back and really listen to his jokes the same way knowing how he died? This is the point I'm talking about.

And right now, it may even seem hypocritical for me to say this because I have been involved within developing this very same technology, testing it, understanding how it works, mainly to understand how it could be misused. But all the same, we literally have an industry that is expected to be worth trillions within four years time. Now, artificial intelligence, I will say for the record that when

used right, it can be a powerful force amplifier to just about anything. We're seeing it integrated in medicine. Understandable. Artificial intelligence has actually been found to spot tumors years before a human doctor had been able to spot it within X-ray scans. Deep space. Artificial intelligence has helped identify numerous planets simply because they were missed by human observers. New Nazca lines. Hundreds of discoveries have been attributed to artificial intelligence taking a second look at several research papers and coming up with its own conclusions. AI hallucinations where it seems like the robots are making up s**t. It's a very real phenomenon. But I digress.

There is some serious evolution taking place. And though there's all these people rooting for the AI bubble to pop. There was a time where automobiles were thought to undergo the same transition. There was a time where the internet, cell phones, they all several people thought they were just going to be fads. Yet, you can't really get anywhere

today without having a car. You can't really touch anything that isn't somehow Wi-Fi connected. And if you're someone like me who has nearly every other operation running within a cloud service to help maintain business contact with friends and relatives that you don't really get to see all that much in person. Much of our lives is on the internet and it is slated for artificial intelligence to do the same.

But yet we still have an industry of AI companions to seemingly address the loneliness. These major companies profiting off of people who feel so isolated, so alone, so mentally distraught that they are falling in love with digital avatars. Things that could easily, perhaps even more easily, disappear if something were to go wrong. And unfortunately we also have the phenomenon of artificial intelligence assisted suicides.

But yet what is something that still remains? You see it a lot in paranormal, new age, spiritual, UFO, cryptid. You see it a lot in those circles where nearly individuals from

every single demographic find some sort of fascination with the unknown, with what could be possible. And quite frankly, let's face it, everything that's coming out about UFOs these days, the question was never really whether or not extraterrestrial life existed. The question was, where the hell is everybody? When it comes to the concept of ghosts, there is a significant overlap within psychological phenomenon. There is a desperation to connect with others who have felt outcasted, marginalized because maybe they had their own experience. This phenomenon has actually become so prevalent that even psychological circles are having to take a pause and acknowledge maybe, just maybe, there's something to it.

I am not here to convince you that the supernatural is more than just myths and legends and stories and misconceptions of people jumping to conclusions. I am not here to convince you that there are unidentified flying objects in the sky. And I'm not here to convince you that those very objects are of

extra terrestrial origin rather than just some random piece of garbage floating in the air, which has happened. What I'm here to discuss is something that I have noticed over and over and over again, and that is the constant, almost inevitable and everlasting conflicts of the mind and the heart that bleed into the very soul.

'Cuz when you watch television, pull up a TikTok, watch it on YouTube, how many times do you actually see actual investigation? You see a lot of jump scares, see a lot of goofing around. You see a lot of begging for likes, comments, and follows. But how many are actually trying to figure out what is going on? I'll take it a step further. How many of you actually have noticed it doesn't really these people don't exactly seem like they actually give a crap about whether or not this stuff is real, about allegedly proving that there is life after death, that Bigfoot is roaming within the woods. They're just in it to try to become famous to fulfill some sort

of ego. Maybe even to hide some of their own mental scars.

And before you say anything, I'm going to say this. Whether you follow me on social media, whether you've heard my rants about these things before, regardless of your own thoughts on these matters, I'm here to tell you about my observations. about the very pitfalls I've fallen into and the marks they left behind. I am not going to sit here and try to pretend that I am above everybody else. I'm not. I'm just as guilty for falling into these traps. But perhaps maybe in the things I've learned I can help somebody better understand themselves. Maybe I can push someone out here listening to me right now to take a chance in the actual exploration of the world around us. Not for likes. Not for follows, not for fame, not for money. If you happen to cheat those things along the way, that's fine. You do you.

But to go back to my earlier remarks, the dynamic I mentioned towards the beginning of this show asking whether or not you truly

knew the people around you. Let's extend that a little further. The people you constantly text. Those whose live streams you follow obsessively. Do you actually know those people? Do you know what happens with them behind closed doors? Chances are you don't. Maybe you do. Maybe you have had a chance to work with and meet some of them. And perhaps, much like myself, you'd be surprised to find out how much was truly unknown.

For me, though I say I began my public journey into paranormal investigation when I was 14 years old, the interest has always sort of sat in the back of my mind. There was a number of incidents that took place that just could not easily be explained away. Some that to this day are often written off as psychological episodes of a traumatic mind, of a traumatized brain trying to understand the world around them. It is with that cue that I'm going to disclose that this story will not be for the faint of heart. There's going to be some things I mentioned that are going to

bother you. It's probably going to get under your skin. There might even be some things that I probably should not be saying on a public platform, but I will because it emphasizes a point.

See, for me, one of the earliest stories that my family often repeats to me, one I physically don't remember but it's prevalent to the story, was that about at the age of two my stepmother discovered she was pregnant. Not because she started to feel sick one day and went to the doctor. It was because me, I one day walked up to her belly, put my hand on her stomach, and said my baby sister was in here. The next day she goes to the doctor, gets tested, and about, about nine months later, one of my younger sisters was born.

But this is far from a happy occasion. You see, my folks, they were never married. My father was nearly abusive in every form of the word. And shortly, it's to my understanding at least, and shortly after she discovered that she was pregnant with me, my mother got away. My father was not happy about

this. This led to constant custody disputes, fights, even falsified police reports of child neglect and abuse. My stepmother eventually became tired of these events. And one day, while I was staying over at my father's, sitting in the living room of their trailer, watching television, my baby sister falling asleep, being taken away to the bedroom while I was still trying to stay up, waiting for my dad to get home from work. There was a sharp pointed pain in the back of my neck. As what was revealed in the court-mandated therapy sessions to determine why the events unfolded the way they did, my stepmother tried to stab me in the back of the neck with a ballpoint pen. In that moment, I swore I saw something like it was being taken down this long corridor of something out of ancient Egypt or Sumeria and saw this large dragon man who offered me a deal. But before, before I could take that deal, something flew me out. Got me away. The next thing I know, I'm back in my father and my stepmother's trailer. My stepmother grabs me by

the wrist, drags me into the kitchen, and puts a six-inch butcher knife in my hand, daring me to stab her. And in the heat of the moment, I managed to pin her down and put the knife into her stomach. She lived. It was at that moment my younger sister, who was barely able to walk, managed to get out of bed and saw what happened. She was not old enough to remember and unfortunately started to believe some of the untrue versions of this story that her mother would start to spin. And when I realized my sister was looking at me, that was when my father came home. The next thing I knew, I was being thrown into a bedroom. The cops pulled me out of there, started asking me questions, essentially insinuating that I had done it on purpose, not believing, believing that she attacked me on her. She attacked me first. My mother and her mother, my grandmother came to the scene. The police started to charge my mother with aggravated assault because I was too young to be prosecuted for such a crime. In which court-mandated ther-

apy had to be instilled in order to determine that I acted in self-defense. My mother didn't exactly handle the situation well. Granted, how could any young mother in that situation? But often for years, at least how I interpreted at the time, she would brag, seemingly brag that I would stab my mother, step-mother out of anger just because I was mad at her to random people, not even acknowledging the full scope of the story.

Fast forward a few years, I was about 6 years old. We were living in Jerome, Idaho. I was about 6 years old at the time. I had another sister, same mom, different dads, who was barely a few months old. And I remember being awakened in the middle of the night by a strange blue glow and electronic humming as three gray aliens came into my room, took me, levitated me out. I watched my mother wake up hearing my screams, call, trying to call for help. And two of those beings that were part of the abduction separated. One to lull my baby sister to sleep, the second to lull my mother back to sleep with a simple wave

of their hand. At the time, I couldn't understand what was happening, but it felt like my own mother had abandoned me when I was literally being kidnapped. The next thing I remember, I was flying through the sky and got brought into this metallic disc. My clothes were stripped down. I remember seeing some sort of holograph of an even nastier looking gray seemingly barking orders, and a voice in my head appeared. Said, "Dakota, if you can hear me, just hold on. We are on the way or help is coming." Something along those lines. The next thing I know, it was like something hit the ship I was in. It reverberated almost like a bell. Then this crew about three or four humanoids stormed the ship, attacked the creatures while I took for took cover. Then a woman approached me. She had these massive sparkling eyes, and the way her head shape was kind of looked kind of odd. Very pointed chin, big eyes. It reminded me of Sailor Moon. And I just felt immediately comfortable with her. They took me out of that ship, took me onto their own, examined me,

saw that I was good, even took me on a ride through space. Obviously, in order to condense for time, I'm paraphrasing certain details. But after a while, it was time for me to go back home. But because of what I saw my mother do, I did not feel safe in coming back. So I begged them to take me to my grandmother's. And after some conversations among the me crew members on board, they took me to my grandparents house where because I was often staying over I had my own bedroom there. I remember being levitated down through a closed window, a woman helping me in the bed, giving me a kiss on the cheek and spreading her three fingers into a triangle formation to my forehead as I drifted off to sleep and what, what I would learn later was a form of memory fogging.

The next morning, my grandparents had no clue I was even in the house. They checked the windows, the doors, everything was locked. And mind you, their their house was about 30 miles away from Jerome. And there is, and there's the massive Snake River

Canyon between those two points in which there are only about three different bridges that you can cross in order to get across it. So, a six-year-old child somehow managed to make a 30-mile trip through the Idaho desert in what would have been the late summer, towards August, without anybody seeing him, without him dying of passing out of exhaustion from the long trip, without any food or water. Very little memory of how he got there aside from his friends from the sky dropping him off and his mother calling him on one of those old phones, screaming over the line because she had no clue where I was. What makes this particular story interesting? Besides a very weird night, as some people tried to just brush it off as, years later, when I started to dig a little deeper into UFO phenomenon, I found the report, August 2002, filed with the National UFO Reporting Center from a couple who was on a road trip for their honeymoon across country, passing through Idaho near Twin Falls, which is roughly in the middle between Jerome and

the town I turned up in, in Myrtle, seeing what appeared to be a disc of lights in the sky flying erratically. Their sighting, when you triangulate, would place them right in the middle of the abduction area. Run this through an artificial intelligence program specifically designed to rule out any possible alternate explanations. The artificial intelligence program gives it a 70 to 80% this chance of being a truly an anomalous event on the grounds of how the hell did a six-year-old kid get across that distance without anybody noticing? And where was th- where did those lights come from? The reason why it didn't give it a higher percentage was because of the lack of any physical evidence at the time, which given it was 2002, camera phones were barely being a thing. And it's not like everybody had some a miniature computer in carrying around in their back pocket.

Was my father involved? My mother immediately assumed so. But here's the thing. In a parental kidnapping case, why would my father just seemingly drop me off with my

mother's parents where I could easily be retrieved?

When I was 9 years old, I was part of a school field trip that took me up to Boisee, Idaho. The location of interest was the old Idaho State Penitentiary, where in spite of nobody believing me for reasons that are honestly of my own fault, I was not able to resist the urge to use the rumors of the place being haunted to scare the living hell out of the girls in my class. I witnessed a shadow apparition replaying the moment of its execution, not knowing who it was I saw until a few years later when the show Ghost Adventures came through town filming for their first season. They identified it the being as likely being Raymond Snowden.

By the time I was 10 years old, it was Thanksgiving. I had suddenly succumbed to renal failure seemingly out of the blue the day of Thanksgiving. What immediately set off alarm bells for my family was that given I was a growing boy who would later turn to become 6'7 later in life, Thanksgiving was of-

ten one of my favorite holidays just because I could eat whatever I wanted and as much as I wanted. So a kid who can practically eat the portion sizes for an NFL football team suddenly, not even being able to eat a few bites of turkey, it raised some flags. Early the next morning, I was screaming in pain in needing to be rushed to the hospital because in spite of my grandmother's best efforts to try to help suppress the pain, thinking it may have just been extreme growth pains or something along those lines at first, she recognized that my condition was too severe and I needed to be taken to the hospital immediately. Where along those rides, I physically remember passing out from the pain and seeing the faces of who I would learn later in life to be deceased relatives, all looking at me confused as hell as to why I was doing there and even more confused about how I seem to disappear and reappear all at the same time. There's a reason why I'm bringing up all these details and I will make that apparent very clear very soon.

It was later ruled that as I said I was going into renal failure. My gallbladder had shut down and on my 11th birthday I had to have my gallbladder taken out. The state of my condition caused an abnormal amount of swelling that partially compressed my spine surprisingly and may have partially stunted my growth. This is what the doctors said. And it is important that I bring up the story because it was through the frequent hospital visits, the chronic pancreatitis I was diagnosed with afterwards because my system was that screwed up and the allergic reactions to certain painkillers. I learned that I could not drink alcohol. I could, but I would immediately have to flush my system with a gallon of water per every glass of wine practically just to avoid any complications and that I could likely not get involved with elicit substances because apparently my family on my mother's side, as I would later learn, has a rare allergy to opioids. Not that I was ever really interested in casual drinking or recreational drugs, but state for the record for the skeptics

who clearly can't think of anything else. This is the truth.

By the time I was 12, you could probably blame part of this on teenage hormones, but infighting with my family became pretty extreme. I was constantly getting in fights at school and the entire ordeal made it so I believed that nobody actually cared about me. And I made a decision one night to hang myself in my bedroom closet with a belt around my neck to completely eliminate myself from the equation. I did write a letter, but I was fairly confident no one would even care to even just check up on me to know that it was happening. I just didn't want to be somewhere where I thought I was causing pain. Anybody who's likely dealt with a single mother has pro- or single parents situation, divorced, separated, never married, like in my case, has probably heard the line that a parent has said out of simple frustration of, "Oh, you're just like your father. Oh, you're just like your mother." Oh, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. A move that often is highly criticized

when learned about in child custody cases these days because the judge know and realize that that moment of parental frustration probably understandable from another parent's perspective can actually cause problems with the child because they are effectively saying that half of them is bad. That was a line used a lot. Even after certain details about my father came to light which I will share shortly.

And in this moment when I was 12, something intervened. When I've told this story, some have tried to claim it was my higher self. Some claim it was Jesus. Some claim divine intervention, some claim extraterrestrial intervention. Regardless of the source, the effect was all the same. When I was going through with the deed, as you will, not to uh try and sugarcoat what was happening, I saw this blue void come out of nowhere. I was unable to move my body, barely able to move my eyes. And I saw this man in front of me. His exact image was quite blurry, but I could tell he maybe had on a white robe

or something about shoulder length blonde hair. And there was just this vibe of concern but understanding for the moment. Without being able to say the word, the man seemed to know exactly what I was thinking, asking, "Who are you?" The man simply looked at me after taking a few steps forward and says, "Dakota, there's someone here to see you." He steps aside. The next thing I notice, there is a little girl. She looked about maybe 6 years old, blonde hair, big blue eyes, and she's absolutely balling her eyes out. You could hear her choking on her tears. And as I'm staring, looking at this girl, the first thing I realize about what I am seeing is that this little girl looked just like me. And even just at the sight of her balling her eyes out, I'm even feeling it as I tell this story that there was just this huge pit that just filled my stomach. This immense amount of guilt like how in the hell could I do this to this little girl? And what made it even worse was when she came a little bit closer to me and threw her tears saying, "Daddy, please don't do it." Whatever

trance I was in in this vision broke. I was able to give this girl a tight hug. She wiggles herself out of my grasp, gives me a kiss on the cheek, and immediately the vision ends. I'm back in the closet, ripping the belt off of my neck, way overwhelmed by what I just saw, and just went to bed. That's all I could think of to do.

Naturally, there's an argument that gets presented within psychological circles that to some extent makes sense, but the story gets way too weirder. Psychological circles have often proposed that this event was a rather strange, unusual, and extreme hallucination forged by a mind trying to survive. But here's the thing. Here's one thing that I would often try to use as a counterwe- I was 12. I liked girls, sure, but I hadn't even had my first kiss yet. So, what was it that my mind assumed that being a father, having a somehow having a child who would later need me, why would my mind pick that particular visual? And understandably so, the fear of becoming just like my father, an understandable fear

who with anybody who probably has a tense relationship with their parents probably understands to some extent. Yeah, maybe that was the call. But I could never forget that visual. Something about it did not sit right with me. It just felt odd. It felt too powerful. Again, the mind and its hallucinations can be extremely powerful in certain circumstances. I am not denying this fact, but something just didn't fit. And I had no clue where to look. Where could I? And that little girl kept visiting anytime my mind would start to drift. Eventually, I would call her Olivia. It seemed only right to give her a name, and she actually seemed to like it when I asked her.

Between this and the incident at the old Idaho State Penitentiary and knowing that ghost hunting was a thing after watching Ghost Adventures, the idea of doing this myself always sort of sat in the back of my mind. Maybe one day, maybe one day. But then one day happened. It was around Christmas time. I was 14 years old. And uh while we were on Christmas break, I remember my mom, my

sister and I, we were visiting my aunt's house. My sister was playing with our cousins. I took their new dog for a little walk. And when I, I got back with a dog who essentially gave me quite the run because a much bigger dog spooked it and he went to go run back to the house. I realized my mother was on the phone. As she was getting off, the first thing she went to ask me was if my father had ever touched me. I wasn't sure how to answer, but my mom having an active career uh collectively over 20 years as a emergency services ditch dispatcher. She never would ask me those types of questions unless something happened. So I asked her flat out, "Mom, what's going on?" She tried to ask me again, "Mom, what's going on? What aren't you telling me?" My aunt had to essentially look at her and say, "Dakota, you're going to want to settle down." She looks at my mom and says, "You need to tell him."

Apparently, my stepmother had made a phone call. And uh apparently with what the police was able to later confirm through their

investigation for about seven years up to that point. So starting from when I was about 7 years old, my sister would have been about five. My father had freent repeatedly had sexually assaulted at least one of my younger sisters. Through the investigation, it was later revealed that at one point he may have actually impregnated her. But the pregnancy didn't take.

See, my grandfather who was uh fighting cancer around this time, I always accredit him to being a source of positive masculinity, as the term gets tossed around. I essentially credit him with being my dad. I was his oldest grandson. I was the one out of all the grandkids that got to spend the most time with him. And he essentially tried to help raise me as I was as if I was one of his own. It didn't ex- was probably contributed by the fact that the people on my mother's side of the family all seem to have a very strong familiial resemblance to each other and I looked and still look to this day with a lot of the same mannerisms as one of his sons, one of my uncles.

So I was always called by the wrong name. But the love was still there. My grandfather had always taught me to be kind towards women. Never lay a hand on them unless in an absolute desperate self-defense measure. My grandfather was the type to where he would often encourage me to beat the living crap out of anybody that would put their hands on a woman. He was also the type who tried to give me the age-old advice of wanting to get bullies to leave me alone. If I wanted to get bullies to leave me alone, I should find the biggest guy at school and just beat the crap out of him. What he failed to remember was that his grandson he just told that advice to was the biggest guy in school, even bigger than the older kids.

So when my when the news about my father came to light, I did not handle it well. And I maintain the stance that anybody who handles that sort of news well should probably be looked into themselves. I wanted to kill him. I told my mother I wanted to kill him. I screamed. I yelled. I was wanting to

break everything in sight. I even said, "Give me alone. Give me five minutes alone with him. I'll end this." The investigation hadn't even started yet, but somehow I always knew something was up. And I could not shake that notion. So what does a 14-year-old boy who feels like his life is falling apart, his family can't be trusted. Half of his own blood was practically poison. What the hell does a 14-year-old boy do? Well, in my case, he takes advantage of the fact most people assume he is much older than he actually is and starts researching how to get involved in paranormal investigation.

Episode 2

Understanding Dakota

Before we begin today's show, I sincerely apologize for suddenly cutting things off. Why did I do that? Well, I was taking a quick drink break. Then I realized I had been going for almost an hour and a half, and to make things worse, I didn't upload a closing song. My mistake.

I'll formally state that when I produce materials like this, I often do not go by a specific script. Anybody who's known me for a long time, as well as my therapist, quickly learned that with Dakota, the situation is always a novel, never a pamphlet. Well, not necessar-

ily never, but rarely. However, I guess in the long run, that actually emphasizes some of the points I was trying to make: How much do we really know about each other?

Those of you who have siblings, how much do you truly know about them? Can you genuinely say you're close to them? What are the latest statistics on individuals living with some form of mental illness these days? One in three. And I'm not just talking about, "Oh, my sister's just screwed up in the head." Believe me, I've been there; I have eleven sisters. But I'm talking about true, intimate knowledge—not incest, for the more morbid members of my audience—I'm talking about wants, dreams, fears. How much can you say you really know?

And for those of you who've been following me for a while, how many of you could honestly say you knew what I've shared so far? Mind you, I barely stopped when I was 14, about to turn 15, and going into paranormal investigation. Seems like a tall order for a kid, but like I said, I fully utilized the fact that

people made assumptions about me against them. It made it very easy for someone like me to not necessarily completely hide my age, just never bring it up.

You see, doctors have actually checked multiple times over the years just to make sure that there wasn't some form of weird abnormality that caused my size. By the time I was nine years old, I was already about 5'8", 5'9". I was nearly as tall as some of the seniors at the school I was attending. By the time I was 14, I was already 6'5", shaving my head, wishing I could grow a halfway decent beard, and didn't really get along with individuals in my own age group for a number of things.

The isolation itself became quite the motivator—or I shouldn't say motivator, that wouldn't be right. The isolation, the clever planning around other people's judgments, and simple misdirection—simple omission—was more than enough for a 14-year-old boy to be welcomed into people's houses in the middle of the night, to gain social me-

dia attention for reasons that are probably a little bit darker than even I'm aware of given everything that's going on right now.

This allowed me to gain the trust of several vulnerable women, some my age, some much older. They had no clue that they were older. And no, nothing happened. Not to say the thought didn't cross my mind. What can you expect? I was a 15-year-old boy. And needless to say, utilizing the fact that people misjudged my age often led to thoughts of experimentation.

Say, going back to when I was about eight or nine years old, barely in the third grade, I honestly thought about trying to sneak into the local bar. Not to drink—this was before the chronic pancreatitis came into play—but not to drink, not to smoke, not to get into drugs, not to do anything else, but just to see if I could. Honestly, the only thing that would have gotten in the way of me being able to actually pull it off was when I found out that the manager at the time happened

to have a daughter who was in my class, so I didn't try it.

Unfortunately, there have been some unsavory types when it came to paranormal investigations. There are still unsavory types. In fact, I feel like there are even more now who have taken advantage of the fact that people show a lot more trust towards spiritual and paranormal ideals than towards law enforcement. There are no regulations whatsoever. So, as long as I had a parental unit attending with me when I went out on an investigation, I didn't have much problem. In fact, when word started to get out about what I was doing, the police actually became fans.

But in reality, a realization that came to me in recent months was that it was all for show. I found myself questioning the legitimacy of the people who said they thought it was cool that I got to do this type of stuff. I found it suspicious that the second I was getting requests to appear on podcasts, be featured in books about local hauntings, even making an

appearance on the local radio station, I found myself questioning the legitimacy. All of a sudden, people who didn't really seem to acknowledge me, say "Hi," smile my way, or give me the time of day—none of them would really acknowledge me—but then they heard rumors that I was starting to get a little bit of notoriety. Then, all of a sudden, they were wanting to be friends. Can you imagine that type of hell?

I mean, come on, public high school. Who doesn't say it was hell? Chances are the people that don't say it was hell were the ones who peaked in high school and never really accomplished anything else other than maybe getting married, having kids, and if they're f***ing happy with that, more power to them.

It even brought up moments of arguments that, thankfully, there were two people in my life who I not only credit for saving me on multiple occasions but were persistent reminders and verbal advocates when teenage angst and sudden notoriety met with

parental arguments. And there were plenty of times where I honestly felt my own mother was jealous of the attention I was getting.

Yeah, sure, I was a bit of an a***hole at the time, I'll admit it. But getting involved in the supernatural provided one hell of a distraction against the fact that I was perhaps getting ready to lose a majority of my family.

Now, for those who may be a little bit concerned, allow me to elaborate. If we were to count siblings as being simply people who happen to share the same mom and dad, I would technically be an only child. None of my siblings are fully related to me. And I'm bringing this up because I know it has been the subject of confusion for many people, most of whom don't really seem to pay attention fully. But I digress. All except one sister, we share the same dad but different mom, plural.

And come to find out, roughly when my father went into prison, even that definition was being tested. Because even though she did try to murder me when I was a toddler

and easier to feel confident about trying to put down like some tossed animal, there was a period of time I did try to show forgiveness towards my stepmother. Tried to brush it all off as her utter stupidity for getting involved with my father, trying to impress a man who his own mother said should eat a bullet.

One thing I didn't share as well, which makes things even more complicated, was the fact that during the investigation into the sexual assault allegations of my father against my sister—and I didn't bring this up until now on purpose because I didn't find out about this part until much later. See, when I was about nine, ten, eleven years old, my father enlisted with one of the local National Guard branches. And as a nine-year-old boy, that was probably the only time in my life I felt any sort of pride about who my father was. I would find out years later that his own biological mother told him that he should eat a bullet as a favor to his kids.

Turns out Crazy Granny was onto something because even though it was speculated

to be taking place before he was deployed over to Iraq, evidence showed, at least what the police were able to definitively prove, that the abuse started around when my father got back. And I'm not saying this was a situation where war changed the man; he wasn't a good man to begin with. But there is a small little detail I found out through the grapevine that really raises some interesting questions. And again, this goes into the question I keep posing: How much do we truly know? Because apparently, at least eleven, to my knowledge, eleven other members of my father's unit have all been tried and prosecuted for similar crimes. Eleven.

And you want to know what was the smoking gun that pointed out how long and how deep my father's abuse of one of my younger sisters was? He talked about it with her over Facebook. Facebook messages between a deployed father and his daughter discussing sexual acts with each other. I didn't even find this out from the police. Turns out one of my cousins was the one that found

out because my sister accidentally left her Facebook wide open.

And for those of you who remember, this particular sister is only two years younger than me. Some of you may be questioning, "What the hell was a kid that young doing on Facebook?" Well, the same reason that a nine-year-old snuck onto Facebook, and was the only reason that I didn't really get in trouble for sneaking on Facebook: I was trying to talk to my dad. I mean, I used to wake up two, three o'clock in the morning to try to talk to him because I knew around that period he was usually free to talk. And sure, my mother, she didn't exactly like the fact that her son was up that early, but again, this was a child talking to his father overseas, serving in the military. She didn't want to take that connection away. She didn't want to take that away because ultimately she would be a b***ch. Pardon my language, but I didn't know the severity of his crimes.

Fast back forward to when I was about 14 or 15. Several long-lost family members

of mine—aunts, uncles, cousins, great-grannies—they started to reach out. And realizing just how little I knew of my father, I started asking some questions because, for a brief period, it felt nice. For a brief period, being able to find those connections made it feel like maybe half of my blood wasn't f***ing poison. And they even supported me going out doing investigations. They tried their best to catch every show I did. I was getting invites to fly to New York, Los Angeles to film for reality TV. And those offers didn't exactly say no because of my age. Now, granted, the parental figure would have had to come along for legal reasons to protect their asses, understandably so. But for a time it felt pure. For a time, it actually felt like I started to have family.

Then came December, almost a year after my younger siblings were put into foster care because of the investigation against the sexual assault allegations on my father. There was one more heartache that really changed the game. The man who supported me, the

man who raised me as his own, taught me how to shoot a gun, taught me to be protective of women, to be who I am, would ask questions when I started to get involved in ghost hunts, even offered his place of employment for my very first paranormal investigation. My grandfather, after five long years, lost his fight with colorectal cancer. It was just a week before Christmas. The man who was like my dad was gone.

And you know what's really f***ed up? Yet another supernatural coincidence came up roughly a week before it happened. And I'll tell you in exactly the way it unfolded for me.

One night I was at home in bed, having a dream that I was in my grandparents' backyard and I was keeping an eye on my grandmother's dogs. She had a few dachshunds and a shih tzu at the time. Now, dachshunds being dachshunds: four feet long with two-inch legs. Her oldest dog, Bailey, had somehow gotten injured, and he was paralyzed at his rear end. And my grandmother was not

the type to let the doctors put him down when he was found. She got him into physical therapy. She had my grandfather build him a puppy wheelchair, and that dog went nuts whenever that wheelchair came out because he knew he was going to get to moving. Now mind you, this is also the same dog my grandfather would actually go on motorcycle rides with. So, you can see this goofy old man, a little basket at the front of his motorcycle, and the two-legged dachshund just loving every minute of it.

My grandparents got that dachshund when I was about nine or ten years old. When I was really young and always going over to their house because my mom was always at work, I just had that option if I wanted to go hang out at Grandma's house for a little bit until my mom got off work. Cool. It was all in walking distance at the time. We actually lived in a house in the same town as my grandparents, and it was just a 10-15 minute walk for me. My grandparents initially got

him as a sort of companion for me when I was staying over.

Shortly after the dog got injured was when my grandfather found out about his cancer diagnosis. So, being that they both got injured about the same time, they became each other's service animal in a way. And at the very end, they got hurt together. They left this world not far apart.

I bring this up because in the dream, everything seemed black and white except myself and this dog. And I remember watching him run around in the backyard, and all of a sudden, something catches his attention, and I see this black haze just in the corner of the yard. All of a sudden, he starts running, the wheelchair on him breaks off, and he's able to use his back legs again. The dog starts running towards this haze. I'm chasing after him like, "Bailey, Bailey, where you going? Where you going?" The dog looks back at me, then goes into the mist like he's chasing something. I go to follow. And by the time I get to the mist, I see this vision. I'm

standing in the doorway, standing in the hall at my grandparents' house, right in front of the doorway of a little "man cave" my grandmother had set up in a spare bedroom just for my grandpa. So, whenever his treatments weren't going well, he was just not in the mood, he had his own little space all to himself. And there was a bed in there, quite a comfortable bed at that. I saw him laying in that bed like he was out of breath. I saw my mom, my aunt, and one of my uncles there with my grandma, and they were all bawling their eyes out, and I could feel the emotion right there. I was seeing my grandfather's last moments. I didn't know when it was going to happen. I had a rough idea that maybe it was soon because nobody looked any older than I last remembered them. And just the sheer shock and weight of that realization of what I was seeing woke me up.

Taking a moment to breathe, trying to go, "Oh. Oh god. It was just a dream. Oh god. Messed up dream." And then there was a phone call. My mother's cell phone starts to

ring. She gets on the phone, and I can hear her voice starting to break. By the time she ends the phone call, she announces, "Bailey's dead." Apparently, he had some sort of kidney stone, if I remember correctly, trying to pass through his system that was about the size of a golf ball, and it tore him open. He was bleeding out.

Sit with that image for a second. Those of you who contemplate the possibility that I am somehow mentally ill, mentally strange, delusional because of some of the things I talk about: What would you do in my shoes in that moment? You had this weird, ominous dream of a family pet disappearing, seeing your grandfather possibly taking his last breaths, and getting some sort of validation the very next morning when one of the two main subjects of that vision is now dead. Sit with that.

Naturally, if you lost a pet, you know it sucks, it hurts. It may have just been an animal, but the animal was part of the family. And rather than having the comfort of know-

ing the animal just passed due to old age, you had the realization that he was likely in pain the last few moments of his life, or at least he feared that the pain was so agonizing that his nervous system shut down to protect him in his final moments as one last act of biological mercy.

Now, fast forward one week. The heartache's still there. There's a winter storm. You're on Christmas break. No school. There's a winter storm, so you decide to carpool. Me, my mom, one of my aunts, my three cousins at the time. We all carpool in my aunt's van because she's the only one that had a vehicle big enough to carry all of us. And you're just sitting in the back seat when the adults think all the kids are not listening, zoning out, paying attention, or goofing off, doing their own thing. You hear them talk about how your grandfather, a man who was essentially a surrogate dad to you, had collapsed that morning. He was just going to the bathroom, and all of a sudden, his legs gave out.

And suddenly that vision comes back to you because you know within the last few months leading up to that, the cancer had spread to various parts of his body, and there was a tumor sitting right on his spine. If there was ever a moment to hear the off-tune violins in horror movies leading up to a jump scare, building suspense, or even the bongo drums from *Jumanji* in what was a 30-minute car ride, almost lengthened to an hour just to maneuver the snow, imagine just having that sensation playing in your head the entire time.

The kids are sent off to one part of the house. You wander towards the next because you wanted to go see your grandpa. All of a sudden, you see him laying there, acting as if he's out of breath, in pain, surrounded by his wife, my grandmother, my mother, my aunts, and my uncle, all tears in their eyes. To say we all know what was happening. The condition starts to escalate. My grandfather starts to act like he's seeing people in the room with him, people that aren't there.

The situation is starting to escalate to where the authorities needed to be called because it was only going to be a matter of time. The storm had lifted a little bit, making it so they could get out there in time. But for everybody who was needed out there, it was still going to take a bit. So, me being the oldest grandchild, I was made responsible to help keep all the dogs and the kids in one bedroom. All of them too young to really understand fully what was going on. And you couldn't help but try to listen through the walls. Almost pushing yourself, trying to figure out how to push yourself through the walls like Doctor Strange using astral projection to get a closer look, to listen for the cues, because I didn't want to be in there with all the kids. I wanted to be there with my grandfather.

Suddenly, there's a familiar voice saying, "Daddy, I'm here." A familiar little girl who once manifested as a vision in that same bedroom showed up. No one seemed to be able to see her, but it was like I could see physi-

cally through her eyes. And through her eyes, I could see these mirages. Where my grandfather said, "Get the dog off of me," I could see the shape of what looked like a dachshund trying to sit on his stomach as he normally would if he caught you laying down. As he's looking around, saying he sees this person and that person in the room, I could see the mirages, and all of a sudden, through this little girl's eyes, I could see him pointing directly at her and saying, "You need to get that girl out of here." That little girl was Olivia. And both she and I were very much caught off guard that day. She didn't think that he could see her. But in that moment, my grandfather saw Olivia, and just the sheer shock of that moment broke the connection to where I could no longer see through her. She apologized, went away.

Next thing I know, just a few moments later, I hear my grandma screaming. I could feel my mother, my aunt, my uncle all break down. I could physically feel it in my chest, and it was like something was ripping me out,

squeezing my lungs, pulling at my heart. My grandmother was screaming because the man she loved, the high school sweethearts—their graduation photos are still in the library of that very small town to this day—was gone. And my cousins, they saw something was wrong. They saw me gripping at my chest, out of breath, asking me what was wrong. And I looked, and then I just said it, "Grandpa's gone." They didn't believe me. Maybe they didn't want to. Maybe they were used to goofy Cousin Kota playing tricks all the time. But a few minutes later, my aunt comes in the room and confirms it.

I tell this story because for those of you who directly assume that Olivia was some complex neurological hallucination of an oxygen-deprived brain, maybe to some extent that was a stimulus, but over time, thirteen other people, most of whom did not even know of that story, have reported seeing her. Thirteen other people, unrelated, had no clue. They all said the exact same thing: "Dakota, she looks just like you."

But again, 14, 15, 16. What the hell was I supposed to do with that information? Part of me wanted to quit ghost hunting, but in reality, while I was at my grandfather's funeral, I was booking cases. I was booking book interviews. I was even ghost hunting at my own grandfather's funeral just to see if I could catch anything because I figured maybe he was willing to help since he was willing to help me in life. Maybe he was willing to do the same in death. And it was a family member, so the ethical boundaries of it were eased over about trying to ghost hunt relatively recent deaths.

From there, I went to expand my knowledge base because I was beyond convinced that there was something true to the supernatural. And there were probably several people out there much like myself who had saw these things and were trying to understand what the hell was happening to them because the situations were just too weird, too out of place to easily write off. I didn't want to stop there. I knew that the equipment was

expensive, and I didn't want to constantly just rely on family generosity for obvious reasons. I didn't want to just rely on occasional, you know, birthday and Christmas present money, or money I earned so my family could get a cheap babysitter or dog sitter or house sitter, whatever the case was at the time. But I did it because I needed the funding because I knew the equipment was expensive. Still is.

And with that came plenty of opportunities: more podcast interviews, more TV shows. It felt like I had genuinely found some sort of grasp in the world, something that made me different, that made people see me. And for a time, I even used to put together YouTube videos on my findings. Not necessarily formatted to get all the jump scares, but the things I saw, the things I caught made you jump. And even the police were like, "Dude, that is creepy," because the student resource officer asked quite often if I was going to be uploading any more videos after he found out about me, which was a good connection to have because, you know, just in

case I ever got myself in trouble, having good favor with local law enforcement could definitely help get me out of it.

But over time, I found myself in this perpetual state of constantly feeling the need to reset because something just doesn't feel right. I always found something that just didn't feel right. It didn't feel true to who I was, true to who I wanted to be. I used to put together evidence videos on YouTube to try to gain some publicity, and for quite a time, it worked. Still works if you know how to manipulate the algorithms that are a lot more sophisticated nowadays than they were back then.

But what ultimately ended up being the turning point was the first poltergeist investigation I took on when I was about 16 years old. A mother of two in a relatively new home, built within just five years prior to when this took place, was reporting all the typical signs of a poltergeist: things moving, getting thrown around, scratches, shadows, the whole shebang. But it just didn't sit right.

Something was up. And it maybe took five minutes within walking in that house, being shown around, observing certain mannerisms with the mother, that I was able to figure out within five minutes what was truly going on in the house.

I had a voice recorder on me to help capture the interview so I wasn't having to pause to take handwritten notes. I could just focus on the case as it was in front of me with my full undivided attention. As I went back to listen to the tape, there were subtle voices, a much older woman, and she sounded pissed off. It's like, "He's hitting her. Get her away from him. I know you can hear me. Get her away from him." I left the house, and when it came time to try to schedule a proper investigation, because the wife/mother said she had to talk to her husband, the husband all of a sudden became quite belligerent. Not to sound judgmental, but that honestly gave away what was happening. That was the final nail in the coffin.

The poltergeist activity. I didn't need to capture evidence of it. Quite frankly, at best, I didn't want to in the first place. Because the poltergeist activity was being caused by the fact that a so-called husband was beating his wife. Beating his wife, abusing his wife, leaving her bruised to the point that she had to wear long sweaters to cover up marks, to conceal the bruises with makeup, to not scare her children who were maybe four or five years old at the time. And there was a spirit in that house. It was the mother-in-law. It was a pissed-off mother-in-law trying to get through to her daughter that she needed to get the hell away. I am happy to report that that case didn't end up with a broken marriage under those terms. She got away. The kids are all grown up now, and the mother's happily moved on with someone else.

That case changed the game for me. It didn't feel right to publicly exploit these cases because I primarily focused on private residences. I didn't necessarily go out to random haunts, trying to go into private resi-

dences to help people out more. That just sounded better to me. I wanted to help people understand what was happening, be a force of good when it seemed like nothing else in the world was helping them.

Why does that suddenly sound familiar? Because in time I came to realize much of what I was trying to pursue. The public attention was a way to artificially—what's the word I'm looking for?—to artificially replace feelings of love, connection, friendship, love, and romance. The types of cases I pursued were reflections on my own mentality, of my own desires, of someone who would come in and save the day. My own desires to have been saved from everything and more that I've discussed, to be a force for good that I needed in my youth. That's what I was truly after.

Later in life, I took the investigative skills that I learned through dealing with my parents and through paranormal investigations and had a brief stint as a bounty hunter. I've managed to apprehend or at least lead

to the apprehension of at least fifty wanted fugitives within a two- to two-and-a-half-year time span. I didn't make a whole hell of a lot of money because I was also working in the deli department at Walmart at the time, which sadly helped me find a lot of those marks because it seemed like any time I would get a lead on a new mark that needed to be hunted down, I'd go home, I'd research them, I'd go to my day job at the Walmart deli, I'd be going through my day, and all of a sudden, there's the son of a b***ch right there. That's literally all it took.

And in that time, I was admitted into an online PTSD support group for people who went through situations of abuse, trauma, people just trying to look for others who understood. And I met this young lady from DC. She was beautiful. She looked a little bit like the actress who played Jennifer "JJ" Jareau on *Criminal Minds*. And ironically, she had family in the FBI and was wanting to pursue a similar career. We got close rather quick, started online dating, as it were. She

told me that she wasn't necessarily turned away by the fact that I was affiliated with law enforcement because she was wanting to pursue a career in the FBI herself, which naturally, being that she looked like a dark-haired JJ, that was quite attractive. Strong-willed woman, beautiful, and willing to kick some ass when she had to. That was awesome.

But she was often nervous about our relationship, nervous about people finding out. She was wanting to keep things under wraps. Uh-oh. Dakota's getting catfished. Dakota got catfished. No, I wish that was the f***ing case. Because you see, when we got together, she revealed to me she was pregnant and she was trying to run to protect the baby from an abusive father. And she was wanting to know if we managed to get together, would I be okay potentially being a stepdad? The thought scared the hell out of me, but I said yes. And to even prove my point further, I was able to find a cheap ring. She came out to see me for a little bit. She was still relatively

early in the pregnancy to where they allowed her. I proposed. She said yes.

Shortly after she went home, she was getting ready to start getting her things together, making the plans to make a cross-country move so we could figure out life. And all of a sudden, communication stopped out of nowhere. No warning, no, "Hey, my phone's broken. I'm not going to be able to talk for a few days until I get a new one in." Nothing. A couple days went by, nothing. Weeks, months, nothing. Three months total. My head started to get racked by the fact that I was starting to spill my heart out to this girl. Thought I found love. Thought I found that connection. I wasn't exactly sure if she was somehow Olivia's mom, but I figured establishing that connection was more important. And maybe, just maybe, I don't know, maybe Olivia herself was actually the baby that was in her stomach.

I didn't know. I didn't have anything to go on to try to gauge this because I didn't exactly find a whole lot of stories about par-

ents seeing their children before birth who weren't already—maybe not knowingly at the time—but a majority of the reports I came across, the mother was already pregnant. So in turn, when trying to evaluate the Olivia situation, if that was the case and at 12 years old I'm having visions of a daughter, and the only time you ever really hear about parents having visions of their children before their birth is when they were already pregnant in the first place, you see where I'm going with this? If I had a child somewhere—not that it wasn't biologically impossible, I did go through puberty early—but naturally the question remains, who the hell was mom? And if I already have a kid, somebody has some explaining to do.

But inevitably, it felt like I wasn't going to get those answers. I didn't have anybody reach out to tell me what was going on. None of them knew about me. None of them knew how to find me until after she was murdered by her ex and they couldn't save the baby. Nobody told me. Nobody reached out until

the year after. I found out three months after it happened when I checked, just out of the blue one day, maybe to find something, started searching her name, and I found the obituary. And I'm not going to lie, I thought about ending it right there, too, but I didn't because I had plans. I figured maybe I'd go get my mind off of things for a fantasy trip we thought about taking together one day.

And then opportunity came to me. I made a trip to Paris and Rome later that year. It was about Easter time. It was shortly after the Belgium subway bombing. The Eiffel Tower was still lit with the Belgian flag colors when I arrived that night. Something else interesting happened a few days into this trip. We took a riverboat cruise in Paris that would have taken us right up to the Eiffel Tower. Seemed romantic, seemed nice. There was a little bit of rain, so most people stayed in the deck below. I stayed above, and I just found myself lost in thought.

And all of a sudden, as I'm lost in thought, I feel this tap on my shoulder. I turn around,

not really paying attention to what's behind me, just assuming that somebody was wanting to take a picture of the Eiffel Tower, and me being a big guy, I was standing in the way. But then I took—had a double take. Standing right behind me was my late grandfather. And with him was a little girl, Olivia.

To try and make this story short, I asked him what they were doing here. My grandfather said that he and Olivia weren't going to be popping around as much. I didn't really need them around as much anymore. They were still going to check in, say "Hi," naturally, but as far as being the emotional support, they felt that I was in a place where I didn't really need them as much. My grandpa said he was proud of me, then all of a sudden, fades away. Olivia looked like she was starting to appear herself, but I managed to stop her. And I asked her an important question. I said, "Olivia, while you're here, is your mom gone?" And she looks at me, and she just says, "No, Daddy, don't you worry. Mommy's coming

soon. Just keep fighting. Mommy needs you to help her."

I found myself, my heart racing. This felt like a sign of hope, to which from that point on, being how much of a symbol of light, of love, of hope that vision of that little girl was becoming, I started to call her Olivia Hope. Whether or not that's going to be her actual name, if she's ever born, has to be decided at a later date. But in that moment, a new light emerged.

I went through the rest of that trip. As we went to Rome, part of my group and I, we went to a dinner with tenors. I tried alcohol for the first time on that trip, flushing my system when we got back to the hotel, as highly, highly, highly advised by the doctors. And I found myself singing on stage with tenors to close the show. They invited me on after we were all—everyone in the room was invited to sing "Happy Birthday" to some woman at another table, and my goofy ass started singing it in opera. Next thing I know, all three of their eyes just shot out of their

skulls, and I was being invited on stage to close the night. One of the best nights of my life. And you can tell from the pictures I was a little under the influence. I had that liquid courage running through me.

But it's nights like that. It made me start to feel—made me start to realize things, start to build further, realize that maybe I could actually accomplish something. But if I was going to pull it off, I was going to have to go much farther than Idaho.

I took on much more trips. I've been to Thailand, Burma, Laos, Ireland, Scotland, UK, went through London a couple times, briefly touched base in Canada. I currently have active prospects to potentially take me to Egypt, Japan. Maybe revisit a few old sites.

I tried on and off again to set up my own entrepreneurial ventures, but again, something just didn't feel right. I just couldn't figure it out. Got involved in more investigations, started up more of my own investigation groups, tore apart those very same groups when I discovered that things I

built were being used as a front for criminal behavior, and I was not going to have that.

And trust me, for those of you who want to read more into this—because I think I've beaten my point enough into you with now what, two hours and almost forty minutes of backstory, and I haven't even gotten through everything. Maybe barely touched on turning twenty. I'm thirty. But do you understand what I'm trying to say? Do you really get what it is I'm trying to say in these first two episodes of this show? Because trust me, there's going to be plenty more. We're going to focus on different aspects. I may go into more detail about specific stories. If you want to hear more, put it in the comments of whatever platform you're listening to this through. I'll be more than happy to share.

But in the end, we have to really ask, with all that is going on in the world yet, how little we seem to really know about ourselves, about our neighbors, about our friends, our family. Are we truly unknown? Or is a more appropriate label, we've become too short-

sighted to see, too impatient to step back and embrace the full picture instead of trying to look in at every little imperfection with news of shootings, bomb threats, potential mass terrorist outbreaks, talks through the grapevine in intelligence communities of an impending attack from al-Qaeda, ISIS, lingering threats of cyber warfare. And any of you who happens to possess any knowledge of technology, tell me I'm wrong and that it doesn't seem like a lot of newer electronics are going through constant updates lately. Well, guess what? I have confirmation from both technical and federal resources that there have been constant attacks. Cyber warfare is happening, but nobody wants to admit it.

And some of you, usually among the older crowd, try to say, "Oh, we didn't have this. Oh, we didn't have that. Oh, it's the internet's fault. Oh, it's social media." All the internet and social media ever did was make it more accessible to find out. Sure, the platform itself helped facilitate a lot of things, but it's

a tool. A tool in which mankind has still yet to fully comprehend its ability. What's that quote? I heard it in an episode of *Criminal Minds*: that the internet is mankind's greatest experiment in anarchy. That we still don't fully understand its capabilities.

And now, in the days of artificial intelligence, that threat, that experiment in anarchy. We built the means for external hands and legs for these machines, the internet, to take on actions for us. But now with artificial intelligence, we're slowly giving them the brains to operate on their own. And in that process, much like how it has been found that overuse of cell phones has actually caused cognitive decline, brains physically atrophying and shrinking from lack of use because we are not engaging the material ourselves anymore. We are relying on the information secondhand, leaving so much to be twisted and manipulated. And the first people that are going to realize how easy it is to manipulate a public that won't take action into their own hands are the ones that are ea-

ger to destroy us for profit. And the genius of it all is that by the time you realize it, the systems are already too ingrained in society to where the one thing they're going to want to do in order to gain more power, the only thing that seemingly makes any logical sense to fix the system is to completely tear everything down and build anew.

When in reality, the aspects we claim to not know about each other, about our friends, our family, about artificial intelligence, all of it. Getting off of our asses, utilizing devices in our hands, not to screw around on TikToks and live streams, wasting money on YouTube or microtransactions for *Call of Duty*, *Fortnite*, whatever. The tools in our hands meant to destroy us can also be tools to rebuild who we are as individuals, who we are as a society. We just have to get off our ass and actually put in the goddamn effort.

In fact, that's what they say about the artificial intelligence movement right now. It's not going to disappear. It really isn't. And like I said in the first episode, some truly mirac-

ulous things have happened because of artificial intelligence. Being able to spot things, notice patterns much faster than the human brain can. It doesn't have to be a source of destruction. It can be a source of growth, of protection, of knowledge. But we got to stop being lazy. We got to stop totally relying on others. We have to build ourselves, to build the strength to not rely on this boyfriend or your girlfriend or a sugar daddy or your mom or your dad. We have to first build ourselves so that when we are fortunate enough to find individuals to work with, to collaborate, maybe even procreate, we are bettering ourselves. We are bettering the people. We are bettering the world. We cannot sit on our asses and wait for the stars to fall, my friends. We have to actually stand and build and reach for the stars ourselves. Because believe me, I've seen it for myself. There are things out there more than happy to meet us in the middle, but they're not going to let us be lazy.

So, I will ask this again to close this show, and maybe, just maybe, over time, you'll find some other voices coming up on here to give their take, to share their story, to share their insights, to answer this question as well. Are we truly unknown, or are we just lazy? Are we just choosing to sleep because it's more comfortable? Don't get me wrong. I have days where not leaving my bed is an option, and trusting my life to the visions my mind either intercepts supernatural means or creates on its own accord. So, I'm not going to lie, some of my best written materials that I actually wrote myself came from inspiration through dreams. But at least I'm putting in the work.

I want to ask you not to degrade you, but to not necessarily question you, but to push you just a little further to the edge in hopes that maybe, just maybe, you realize you have all the means to fly, to reach truly for the stars and understand that our world is not limited to the screens we hold in our hands, to the illusion of connection that either internet friendships seem to bring, that catfish

go to exploit. But there is so much out there. And yes, some of it, a lot of it is scary, but there is so much more out there that is truly beautiful, amazing, spectacular, that would absolutely take your breath away. And trust me, I have been fortunate to even find one of those connections myself. And trying to push forward to secure that woman in my future scares the hell out of me.

But if I'm willing to take these steps to share with you my darkest hours, to share with you what it is that builds Bald and Bonkers, "The Specialist of the Strange," because those are just little brand labels for efforts I've been building for years. You want to know the reason why Bald and Bonkers exists? Is because it allows for the full exploration of it all. Not just limiting myself to what may or may not be paranormal, but it allows for an exploration of the entirety of sentient experience. Not just the human, not ET, ghost, demon, angel, but the sentient experience to understand fully what it is that makes us alive.

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So I will ask again, my friends, are we truly unknown, or are we just blinded by all these lights we're shoving in our faces?

Episode 3

Olivia Hope

Welcome, no matter the time of day, and thank you for joining me on this episode. If you've continued this journey with me, perhaps you're seeking more depth about the incidents I've only briefly mentioned—because, as I've told my therapist, my life is always a novel, never a pamphlet.

This brings us to the core theme of this show: the unsettling possibility that we don't truly know one another. We often remain unaware of the deep hopes, fears, desires, and beliefs of even the people we love. When these personal stories surface in conversa-

tion, they frequently spark intense, divisive debates. People often struggle to accept experiences that fall outside their own frame of reference, assuming everyone else's life must be somewhat similar to theirs. Yet, the reality is often drastically different. I've lost count of how many times my "exotic" tales were dismissed simply because the skeptic hadn't achieved the same things, seen a UFO, or had a Hollywood experience. They conclude that I must be some special being with exclusive access to my dreams.

Notice my past-tense wording: *once* considered my dreams. Do I still love exploring and creating content? Absolutely. I'd love a life dedicated to exploration, content creation, and a self-sustaining cycle I could be truly proud of. However, that often demands sacrifice. If the sacrifice was merely small details of my stories, that would be fine. But it seems we are often forced to sacrifice our true selves, perhaps because we haven't fully grasped who we are or what certain life

events truly signify for us. The Story of Olivia Hope

For this episode, I want to delve deeper into one of the most personal stories I have lived and openly shared in my ongoing effort to understand: the story of Olivia Hope.

A Crucial Note: Olivia was the name I gave to a little girl who appeared to me in a vision during a period when I attempted to end my own life. If you are struggling or feel triggered by this topic, please know you are not alone. In the episode link, you will find a free, comprehensive international resource and hotline registry, compiled by my company, Bald and Bonkers Network LLC, covering every country on Earth. This will also soon be released as a physical book. I sincerely apologize if this topic is triggering, but I refuse to censor the graphic details, as I believe we must understand the dark to embrace the light.

I'm not here to convince you of her objective reality. I am here to share the saga I call **the Olivia Paradox**. Even now, I cannot

deny that the circumstances were simply too bizarre to dismiss her as a pure hallucination, unless some grand cosmic event allowed that hallucination to take form and assist 13 other people who knew nothing of her existence.

The Vision and the Guilt: Olivia Hope saved my life. The vision's power wasn't just the shock of her appearance, but what she said: **"Daddy, please don't do it."** The residual feeling of guilt, even now as I recount it, is overwhelming—the sheer shock of potentially harming an innocent child, who was possibly my own, was my wake-up call. It was enough overwhelming confusion to pull me out of that state. My immediate, desperate response was to go to bed and try to pretend it never happened.

The Recurring Presence: As I grew up, went through school, and got into ghost hunting, this little girl kept reappearing like a guardian angel. Her presence was often just enough of a mood boost to navigate dark episodes. The day my surrogate father figure—the man who was essentially my

dad—passed away was when her reality truly solidified for me. My grandfather saw her, too. This event, and the question of how much alleged psychic phenomenon is triggered or misdiagnosed from serious mental health concerns, will be a separate episode. *The Skeptic's Arguments: Survival Mechanism and Premature Fear*

Skeptics often raise two questions I can't fully rule out, even if they don't fully explain my experience.

1. The Survival Mechanism: One argument, pondered even by my closest childhood friends, is that in an absolute panicked survival state, the human mind can materialize a vision. This vision would aim to shake my focus, instill a purpose in life, and drive me to overcome my endurance. They suggest Olivia was merely a **survival mechanism** my mind created, knowing my deepest protective pattern: the fear of an innocent child being hurt.

My counter has always been: I was 12 years old. While not biologically impossible,

what 12-year-old boy is actively thinking about having children, or would subconsciously resort to that specific mental image for self-preservation?

The answer lies in the years of hearing the adults I was supposed to trust tell me I was "just like my father." For a child of separated or divorced parents, this is often a frustrated outburst. But in my case, those remarks persisted even after my father faced sexual assault allegations involving one of my younger sisters. I knew he was a terrible person. For example, when my stepmother was in the hospital delivering my younger sister (the same one later found exchanging sexual messages with him), my father, unable to reach me as I was camping with my maternal grandparents in the South Hills (where cell service was nonexistent in 1998), became enraged. Instead of just accepting it, he physically assaulted my stepmother while she was still recovering in her hospital bed, leading to him being banned from the hospital. That paints

a clear picture of the man I was constantly told I would become.

Naturally, I developed a premature fear of repeating those cycles. I have no desire to be a man like that. This fear, I believe, is what the survival mechanism tapped into.

2. Scanning for the Mother: As time went on and Olivia seemed less like a mental image and more like a true presence, two personal questions emerged: If I truly had a child at 12, who was the mother, and was she attractive? While the last question is unimportant now, if I had left it at that, I might have avoided many turbulent relationships.

As I grew up, lacking good romantic role models in my parental units, I desired to be a good partner and, should fate allow, a good father. This meant Miss Olivia needed a good mother. So, starting around age 14, nearly every relationship I entered became an audition. I was subconsciously **scanning every woman**—from the classmate who messaged me after the vision to my first girlfriend, to prospective partners—trying to

psychoanalyze and predict the future, hoping to convince myself that if I just hung on long enough, that little girl would come into my life.

I openly state that I am open to having a child, but I understand it takes two. I have tried not to make it my life's priority, mindful of the struggles my own parents faced, who were still "growing up" themselves. I've maintained that I would welcome any child with open arms if the woman I love approached me pregnant.

To the best of my knowledge, I do not have any children. I hope any potential mother didn't feel the need to hide that information from me.

The Pregnancy Scare in Paris:

There was one major scare. After a one-night stand with a lovely woman in Paris, she contacted me three months later, fearing she was pregnant after a positive test. I was rattled. While I was in Paris, Olivia had told me "mommy was coming soon," and I thought this was it. A few days later, she reached out

again. It was a false positive: she had ovarian cancer, which caused a hormonal fluctuation. We stayed in touch during her treatments, and I'm happy to report she seems genuinely happy with a new partner now. The Pressure and the Satellite

My recent therapy ventures pointed out a critical issue: by publicly sharing the story of Olivia Hope, I essentially run the risk of sabotaging nearly every romantic relationship. A woman doing her due diligence before meeting me might find my stories of "star wife" and "star family," making me sound like a "crazy cult leader." The first conversation could go from "What's your favorite color?" to "Hey, I think you might be the prophesied mother of the child who saved my life. Want to get freaky?" Even if I try to dance around the creepiness, the pressure forces even the most open-minded person to question my sanity.

Fortunately, my current significant other has a heart full of understanding, patience, and kindness. She realized that the man she

met was carrying heavy damage, and she saw through the "Tom Ellis from *Lucifer*" confidence act I put on (knowing she was a fan). She saw who I truly was and is trying to help me realize it for myself.

I confess: I often feel unworthy of her love and support. However, thanks to the combined efforts of my human therapist (a specialist in complex PTSD) and an AI program recommended for self-doubt episodes, a profound concept was shared with me that I want to share with you:

Hold your romantic partners, your relationships, your accomplishments, and your reasons for getting out of bed as SATELITES, not lifelines.

A **satellite's** light is always there, providing direction and information. A **lifeline** is something you grip for dear life; if either of you has a moment of weakness, the rope could slip, and one or both struggle severely. **Satellites, not lifelines.** The Message of Hope

I honestly fell in love with that remark. It made me re-evaluate my visions. Regardless of the weird, unexplainable things that have happened, the message remains: **Love exists even in your darkest days.** Something—whether psychological, extraterrestrial, or angelic—was willing to break all known logic to rescue me. It wants you to grow, prosper, and become your best self, free from life's inhibitions.

The first Buddhist teaching is that life is suffering. We will all experience it. What matters is what you *do* with that suffering. Will you wallow, or will you share your stories and turn your pain into passion?

Regardless of whether Olivia was a mental hallucination, she has been documented by multiple individuals to save people from demonic possession (involving the Hatman), and from severe physical attacks that caused people to cough up blood and lose their breath. **This vision not only saved me but saved others.**

The message behind Olivia is **hope**: hope for a better day, hope for love, prosperity, and success in whatever form you define it. The only thing truly impossible in life is impossibility itself.

I realize that I no longer *need* their intervention. They are welcome to check in, but as Dakota Frandsen—not the specialist of the strange, not the founder of Bald and Bonkers, but as myself—I must be the one to take the steps. We cannot wait for the stars to fall; they fall all the time. The meteor didn't kill the dinosaurs; the aftermath did.

Instead of waiting for a miraculous vision, look within and ask: **Are we truly unknown, or are we just too scared to take action?**

The world is scary, but every person on this planet has the chance to truly do something good and make an impact. If you find true joy in live streaming, ghost hunts, or random content creation, do not let me stop you, so long as you are not purposely trying to hurt anybody. If you hurt someone worth

keeping around, make every effort to make it right.

If you have been hurt, do not hide your feelings to avoid conflict. Anyone worth keeping around will do everything they can to be there for you and make things right the moment you tell them something is wrong.

I fully acknowledge that the woman in my life has been a source of kindness and love unlike anything I've ever felt. Our relationship is the longest I've held onto outside of family, and I hope to keep her around as long as possible. I say this not for her to hear, but because it is the truth.

If you are lucky enough to have someone like that in your life—someone who helps you realize that the afflictions you see against you are nothing more than your own head getting the better of you—cherish them. Give them a hug, appreciate the change, the light, and the love they brought you. Let them know before it's too late. **Do not let the heart become unknown,**

for that is the cruelest form of self-torture.

My name is Dakota Frandsen. I hope this brought you some meaning. If you are struggling, please use the link in the description for the international registry of mental health emergency services. Reach out to someone. Human beings have survived because we worked together. It's time we remember that before it's too late.

International Emergency Resource Document: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-1vSpM-9Ztee4q8t2vwaxUHN-PDXVjtjAeHYzj4hDYVP8AR9b6LJyl-neXGQgDHQgycCGgdbkLQ7fVAiGLn/pub>

Episode 4

The Death of the Specialist

THIS IS NOT A SUICIDE LETTER.

Let me be unequivocally clear: these pages are not a declaration to literally end my physical life. That particular, desperate attempt belongs to my past, a failure that, in retrospect, became the crucible for my future. What remains now, standing on the precipice of my 30th year, is a man who must make a conscious, necessary choice to liberate his authentic self—to finally claim the life he truly desires, with the profound hope that the woman who changed the entire tra-

jectory of his world will choose to stand by his side.

For sixteen long years, I lived and breathed behind a title, a formidable mask of my own making. While my birth certificate reads Dakota Frandsen, to the vast majority of the public, I was known as the "Specialist of the Strange." What began as a simple, self-deprecating joke quickly solidified into a powerful brand, a custom-forged suit of psychological armor, and a badge I wore with unwavering honor for over a decade. I was the imposing, bald figure—a presence designed to command attention—who fearlessly hunted the supernatural, conversed with the cosmos, and plunged headfirst into the darkest, most terrifying corners of the unknown world.

But armor, no matter how brilliantly polished or well-intentioned, eventually outlives its purpose. When worn too long and tied too tight in a desperate effort to keep the painful world out, it inevitably stops protecting you and starts the slow, suffocating process of sealing you in.

This entire manuscript is a eulogy: it is the documentation of the conscious, necessary death of the "Specialist of the Strange." I am writing this to provide a raw, unflinching explanation of why that persona had to be retired—not because the mysterious and often terrifying experiences I documented weren't real, but because the avatar I painstakingly created in a moment of desperate self-survival was actively destroying the very life I was trying to build and, most unforgivably, causing collateral damage to the people I loved most dearly.

To truly grasp why the Specialist had to be buried, you must first understand the devastating circumstances of his birth.

My precipitous dive into the world of the paranormal was not fueled by youthful curiosity or an academic interest; it was a desperate act of survival. By the time I was fourteen, the horrifying truth had crystallized: the monsters I was taught to fear in stories and dark basements weren't in haunted asylums—they were the people charged with

raising me. My father's escalating abuse culminated in his eventual imprisonment for crimes against my sister. My stepmother, in a moment of terrifying volatility over a custody dispute, once tried to stab me in the neck with a pen. By my early teenage years, I was a boy riddled with paralyzing fear, terrified of the genetic lottery, feeling as though half the blood coursing through my veins was toxic poison. When my grandfather—the singular, true source of positive masculinity, stability, and protection in my young life—finally lost his long, brutal battle with cancer, I was left completely and irrevocably adrift.

How does a terrified, powerless fourteen-year-old boy escape such a painful, inescapable reality? He looks to the shadows.

I threw myself headlong into the all-encompassing distractions of ghost hunting, UFO research, and the entire spectrum of the supernatural. It offered a powerful, absorbing diversion from a perpetually crumbling and hostile family life. I sought out haunted houses and violent poltergeist cases not

merely for proof, but because, deep down in my core, I desperately yearned to be the "force for good" that I had so desperately needed when I was the helpless child trapped in that house.

The Specialist served his purpose admirably for a long period of time. I rubbed shoulders with minor celebrities, guested on countless podcasts, and built a substantial, loyal following. It felt, for a time, like I had finally found my place in the world—a niche where I was accepted, perhaps even revered. However, looking back now with the crystal-clear clarity afforded by time and intense therapeutic work, I realized it was nothing more than a hollow substitute for authentic living.

The relentless pursuit of public attention, the adrenaline-fueled investigations, the carefully curated persona—it was all an elaborate, unconscious attempt to artificially replace the unconditional love, deep connection, and true friendship that were catastrophically lacking in my real, personal

life. I was compulsively chasing phantoms and spectral residue to avoid facing the genuine loneliness epidemic festering in my own heart. I was constantly asking the world, "Are we truly unknown?" while simultaneously ensuring, through the veil of my own making, that nobody actually knew *me*.

The turning point began to manifest during the cases themselves. I vividly recall investigating a supposedly "violent poltergeist" in a seemingly normal suburban home. Within five minutes of observation, the chilling realization hit me: the "supernatural" scratches on the walls and the inexplicably thrown objects were not the work of a demon, but the gruesome result of a husband viciously beating his wife. Publicly exploiting these intensely human traumas for content and brand maintenance no longer felt remotely right. The Specialist was no longer serving the truth; he was merely maintaining the lucrative facade of a brand.

The hardest, most painful truth I had to accept—and the definitive, non-negotiable

reason the Specialist had to be buried—was the devastating damage this persona inflicted on my personal life.

The fantastical stories and spiritual lore I had maintained to psychically survive my darkest hours had, over time, become the very things holding me back from happiness. By publicly upholding the detailed lore of the Specialist—speaking openly about my deeply personal visions of a future guardian angel daughter named Olivia, or maintaining that I was a direct emissary of a "star family" from another world—I was actively and subconsciously sabotaging nearly every single romantic relationship I tried to build.

Imagine the perspective of a woman: she's doing her due diligence, looking me up online, and suddenly the man she's dating sounds indistinguishable from a "crazy cult leader." The incredible, crushing weight of my paranormal baggage forced those who genuinely cared about me to constantly question my stability and sanity. Instead of protecting me, the Specialist was brutally iso-

lating me, turning away potential lifelong partners because the pressure of living up to these cosmic, supernatural expectations was entirely unfair and unsustainable for them. I was subconsciously scanning every woman I met, turning relationships into unconscious auditions for my spiritual visions, rather than simply loving and accepting the beautiful human being sitting in front of me.

Through years of intense therapy, I encountered a profound concept that shattered the Specialist's worldview: we must learn to hold our romantic partners and significant relationships as *satellites*, not as *lifelines*. A satellite provides essential light, direction, and a frame of reference, allowing you to navigate your own orbit. But a lifeline is something you panic-grip out of sheer desperation; if the rope slips or snaps, both of you are guaranteed to drown in the process. The Specialist treated everything and everyone as a lifeline because, in his core, he was always drowning, clinging to the wreckage of his past.

I remain eternally grateful for the visions, the unexplainable experiences, and the sheer, desperate hope they offered—they kept me alive when I was a suicidal twelve-year-old boy. But I have finally reached the critical realization that I no longer need their intervention. The man I am today is strong enough to save himself.

Fortunately, a remarkable woman with a patient, profoundly understanding heart entered my life. She saw straight through the confident, "Tom Ellis from *Lucifer*" performance I was putting on. She didn't see the Specialist; she saw a man carrying immense, heavy damage, and she loved him anyway. She helped me realize a fundamental truth: we cannot sit on our hands, passively waiting for the stars to align or for a cosmic entity to fall from the sky to save us. We have to roll up our sleeves and do the hard, internal work ourselves.

This book is the unvarnished, raw truth harvested from my personal journals. It is the comprehensive story of the traumas that

marked me, the truly unexplainable phenomena that shaped my perspective, and the excruciating hard lessons that forged the man I am today. More importantly, it is my conscious, irreversible decision to step out from behind the powerful, yet ultimately destructive, avatar.

The Specialist of the Strange had to die so that Dakota Frandsen could finally learn how to truly live.

THE WEIGHT OF THE MASK

For sixteen years, I wore a title that began as a simple joke but rapidly calcified into the absolute bedrock of my public identity. I presented myself to the world—on podcasts, in books, and across the international supernatural community—as the "Specialist of the Strange," a moniker I wore with fierce pride and an impenetrable suit of armor. I built my entire professional and public brand, my legacy, my shield, and my currency on this singular persona. The Specialist was an impeccably crafted illusion, a public image I

painstakingly cultivated to project unwavering confidence, profound mastery of esoteric lore, and an almost clinical, detached fearlessness in the face of the unknown. I was the last resort, the guy you called when the strange was simply too strange to be handled by mere enthusiasts or armchair investigators. I was the expert who not only believed but meticulously claimed to understand the mechanical, cosmic clockwork behind the hauntings and the high strangeness.

Yet, armor, when worn too long and too tightly, eventually ceases to protect; instead, it suffocates you. The immense, unyielding weight of being the Specialist—of carrying the constant expectation of infallibility and omniscience—began to fracture the man underneath, piece by piece, until the cracks were too wide to ignore and the structure became unstable.-----Looking back, with the painful, blinding clarity afforded by intense therapy and self-reflection, I now understand that my headlong immersion into the paranormal wasn't simple curiosity or a calculated

career choice; it was a desperate, necessary survival tactic. It wasn't a choice I made freely; it was a lifeline thrown into a raging emotional storm that threatened to drown me at a tender age. The pursuit of ghosts and demons was, quite literally, a matter of life or death for my psyche.

At fourteen, using my tall stature and a borrowed gravitas to appear older, more formidable, and utterly uninterested in my own fear, I plunged headlong into the shadows because my immediate, tangible reality was too agonizing to face. Home was not a sanctuary but a war zone from which I felt I had to flee, physically and emotionally, every single day. I was reeling from the constant, unpredictable danger of a deeply abusive father, and a stepmother whose shocking, casual violence included an attempt to stab me with a pen in a moment of fury. Worse still was the terrifying, soul-crushing belief instilled by the adults around me that half of my own blood was poison—that my very essence was

tainted and unworthy of love, acceptance, or grace.

When my grandfather—my sole beacon of safety, the only person who truly saw and valued the authentic me—died, the entire structure of my young life collapsed. The grief was a physical weight, and I was utterly adrift, alone, and without hope. I needed an immediate escape, a total translocation of self, and a compelling, dramatic way to be the "force for good" that was so brutally absent and desperately needed in my helpless, terrified childhood. I needed a new identity, one that commanded instant respect and offered impenetrable, psychological protection against the agonizing shame and vulnerability of my home life.

So, I built the Specialist. I crafted him meticulously, brick by terrifying brick, out of relentless research, performative bravado, and a profound, aching emotional need for competence and control. He was the perfect weapon against the chaos of my past.

For a long time, the mask performed its job flawlessly: it kept me alive, constantly occupied, and, most importantly, *safe* from the unbearable, crushing pressure of my own emotional reality. Under the guise of the Specialist, I investigated legendary hauntings across the country, threw myself into intense, high-stakes archival and field research, rubbed shoulders with television celebrities and best-selling authors, and essentially hurled myself into the darkest, most compelling corners of the unknown. I created what felt like a legitimate, indispensable place for myself in the vast, indifferent universe. I was busy, I was important, and I was perpetually needed—a stark contrast to the unwanted, damaged child I felt myself to be.

But the harsh, insidious truth that gnawed relentlessly at the edges of my consciousness was that the investigations, the public bravado, and the attention were a hollow substitute—an artificial, shimmering replacement for the genuine, nourishing love, emotional connection, and true friendship I

desperately lacked in my private life. The applause and the acclaim were loud and constant, a deafening white noise that I used to drown out the silence, but they didn't echo in my empty rooms once the cameras stopped rolling and the convention lights went down.

I stood behind cameras and microphones, projecting authority and assurance, asking the world, "Are we truly unknown?" while simultaneously ensuring no one actually knew *me*. My public self was a masterwork of deflection and theatrical charm. I had perfected an imposing, charismatic "Tom Ellis from *Lucifer*"-style confidence act: a witty, charismatic, and imposing facade designed to instantly repel and deflect anyone who came too close, anyone who might dare to peer behind the curtain of the Specialist and see the wound underneath. I was consumed by the terror that if the damaged, bleeding man beneath the armor was revealed—the boy who still flinched violently at unexpected loud noises, the one still haunted by the

past—people would run away in disgust or pity. Therefore, I ensured they only ever saw the Specialist: flawless, untouchable, always in control, and utterly devoid of need.

But the unyielding weight of maintaining this persona became a crushing, physical burden I carried everywhere. I was perpetually, bone-deep exhausted from constantly scanning the room for threats, from always having to be the fearless, knowledgeable guy conversing casually with the cosmos, and from treating every single human interaction as a potential threat to my carefully constructed lore and, by extension, my very survival. The mask I wore to survive was now ironically and tragically inhibiting the one thing I truly desired and fundamentally needed: to be loved and accepted for who I was, simply Dakota Frandsen, flaws and all. The price of the Specialist's survival was the slow, agonizing death of the real me.

I longed, with a desperate, soul-deep ache, to take the mask off and lay the armor down on the ground. I yearned for the simple, ter-

rifying freedom of authenticity, of saying, "I don't know," or, "I need help." But I couldn't. The thought of disarming and stepping out from behind the facade brought on a full-body, paralyzing terror—a terror rooted deeper than professional failure.

To understand why shedding the Specialist was fundamentally impossible—why it felt like choosing oblivion over life—you must understand its cornerstone. The persona wasn't merely built on successful ghost hunts and clever soundbites; it was anchored by a profoundly personal, cosmic mythos that I believed absolutely, to the marrow of my bones. This mythos wasn't a philosophical theory or a career narrative; it was a non-negotiable truth anchored by a crystal-clear, life-altering vision that literally saved my life at age twelve—a vision of a little blonde girl with bright blue eyes, a girl who became the absolute, non-negotiable center of my purpose and my reason for being.

Taking off the Specialist mask meant dismantling the very prophecy that kept my

heart beating. It meant negating the divine mandate that gave my lifelong pain a cosmic meaning and a trajectory. It meant confronting the terrifying, inexplicable, and potentially fatal uncertainty of the Olivia paradox. It meant inviting the chaos I had spent sixteen years trying to master and repel.

UNDERSTANDING THE OLIVIA PARADOX

The darkness that consumes a twelve-year-old boy is a specific, terrifying kind of suffocating. It isn't born of complex existential dread or philosophical ponderings, but of a primal, overwhelming fear. It was the crushing belief that nobody in the world cared whether I existed, combined with a paralyzing terror of the future. I looked at the men in my family—particularly my father—and felt a sickening certainty that I was destined to become the very monster that had haunted my childhood. To spare myself, and perhaps to spare the world, I decided to end it.

I remember the stifling air of my bedroom closet. I remember the rough leather of the belt wrapped tight around my neck. I was fully prepared to step off into the void and leave the screaming, the infighting, and the agonizing isolation behind forever.

But then, the world—or perhaps something entirely outside of it—intervened.

As the edges of my vision began to darken, the cramped, mundane reality of my closet was torn open by a brilliant, blinding blue void. It was an impossible light, vibrating with an energy that instantly paralyzed me. I couldn't move. I couldn't breathe. I was suspended in a fractured moment of time. From the hazy depths of that blue expanse, a blurry man with shoulder-length blonde hair stepped forward. I couldn't make out his features, but his voice resonated in my chest with an absolute, undeniable clarity.

"Dakota, there's someone here to see you."

He stepped aside, and from behind him emerged a little girl. She looked to be about six years old. She had bright, golden-blond

hair and massive, piercing blue eyes. As she stepped into focus, a shockwave of recognition hit me so hard it nearly stopped my heart: she looked exactly like me. She was choking on her own tears, her small face twisted in a profound, devastating grief. She took a hesitant step closer, her voice trembling but cutting through the silence of the room.

"Daddy, please don't do it."

That single plea shattered my paralysis. The physical constraints of the void broke, and I ripped the belt from my neck, collapsing to the closet floor in a heap of tears and gasping breaths. I pulled her into a desperate, clinging hug. In that dim, dusty space, she became my lifeline. She unequivocally saved my life that day, anchoring me with a powerful, fiercely protective guilt that instantly countered my deepest fears. I couldn't become an abusive man if I had an angel like her to protect. I named her Olivia.

But her salvation came with a heavy, invisible chain. How does a twelve-year-old

process a vision of such magnitude? My mind was left to grapple with an agonizing dichotomy: either my brain had executed a miraculous, hallucinatory failsafe to keep me from killing myself, or I had just experienced an event that defied every known law of the universe.

As I grew older, the lingering presence of Olivia became both my shadow and my compass. I wanted nothing more than to be a good partner and a fiercely loving father, which meant one inescapable thing: Miss Olivia needed a good mother. Subconsciously, my mind began to frantically scan the world for her origin. I was a boy burdened with a cosmic prophecy, and I was desperate to fulfill it.

This desperate search morphed into an obsessive, overarching filter for my life. Every romantic encounter, every lingering glance, transformed into a high-stakes audition. I was constantly running a mental calculus on every woman I met; from just the girls I went to school with, to swimsuit models and ac-

tresses, to even Celeste, I couldn't help but analyze the potential no matter how astronomically slim it seemed. I was looking for the missing piece of a puzzle only I could see.

The pressure this placed on my relationships was immense, suffocating, and deeply unfair to the women involved. I was placing the weight of an unborn, ethereal child squarely on their shoulders. When the burden of keeping this secret became too much and I finally shared these intense visions with my partners, the fallout was inevitable. I didn't sound like a vulnerable boyfriend sharing a near-death experience; I sounded like a crazy cult leader pitching a delusional "star wife" prophecy. I was actively sabotaging my own happiness, poisoning my present in pursuit of a ghost from my future.

But the terrifying truth was that she wasn't just a ghost. The first monumental crack in my solitary delusion happened years later, during a brutal winter storm. My grandfather—my surrogate father, my greatest supporter, and the rock of my reality—was losing

his harrowing battle with colorectal cancer. The house smelled of sterile medical supplies and impending grief. As he lay dying, I sat in the adjacent room, listening to his labored breathing through the thin walls.

Suddenly, a familiar, sweet voice echoed in the stillness of my mind.

"Daddy, I'm here."

In a dizzying instant, my perspective violently shifted. I was no longer sitting in my chair; I was looking through Olivia's eyes. Through her vision, I watched my dying grandfather. I saw his frail chest rise. I saw his eyes widen in recognition. I watched as he laboriously lifted a trembling arm, pointed a finger directly at her, and rasped with whatever strength he had left, "You need to get that girl out of here."

The sheer, electrifying shock of him acknowledging her physical presence snapped the connection. I was thrown back into my own body, gasping for air. It was a profound, terrifying validation. Olivia wasn't just in my

head. Another human being, on the precipice of death, had seen her.

Time moved forward, and I eventually found myself working as a bounty hunter—a gritty, cynical profession that felt worlds away from blue voids and guardian angels. Yet, the hope remained. It surged back to life when I met a beautiful woman online from Washington, D.C. She was the spitting image of the character "JJ" from *Criminal Minds*, fiercely intelligent and devastatingly beautiful. As we grew closer, she revealed she was pregnant and running from an abusive ex-partner. Without hesitation, I stepped up to the plate. I agreed to be a stepfather, and deeply in love with the life we were planning, I proposed to her. In the quiet moments of my heart, I began to fiercely, desperately hope that the baby she carried was Olivia. I thought the prophecy was finally culminating.

Then, the dream was shattered by sudden, agonizing silence. Messages went undelivered. Calls went straight to voicemail. Three

months later, the truth arrived not in a text, but in an obituary. She had been brutally murdered by her ex. The baby did not survive. The tragedy devastated me on a molecular level, plunging me straight back into the absolute darkness of that childhood closet. I wanted to die. The pain was a physical weight, crushing my chest.

Seeking a desperate escape from the suffocating grief, I booked a flight and traveled to Paris shortly after the Belgium subway bombings. The world felt broken, mourning its own tragedies, and I walked the damp streets feeling like a ghost. One dreary afternoon, I found myself on a rainy riverboat cruise near the Eiffel Tower, lost in the choppy, gray waters of the Seine.

Then, I felt a distinct, solid tap on my shoulder.

I turned around to see my late grandfather standing tall, restored and whole. Beside him, holding his hand, was Olivia. The air around them felt thick, charged with that same impossible energy. My grandfather looked at me

with a gentle, loving finality. He told me they wouldn't be appearing as much anymore—because I was strong enough now. I no longer needed them.

Panic flared in my chest. I looked down at Olivia, terrified that my one anchor was leaving me adrift. I asked her if her mom was gone forever, if the dream had died in D.C.

"No, Daddy, don't you worry," she said softly, her blue eyes shining. "Mommy's coming soon. Just keep fighting. Mommy needs you to help her."

That vision on the riverboat reignited my fractured will to live. I officially named her "Olivia Hope," cementing her as a symbol of light amidst the ruins of my life. A subsequent false alarm with a woman I had a one-night stand with in Paris—a positive pregnancy test that tragically turned out to be ovarian cancer—cruelly tested my resolve, but I kept fighting. I clung to the name, and to the promise.

But between that rainy day in Paris and the present moment, the concept of Olivia

transcended my personal visions entirely. What solidified the terrifying, awe-inspiring idea of Olivia being tangibly real in some capacity was the eventual emergence of thirteen individual eyewitnesses.

These weren't friends or family members humoring my trauma. Most of them were complete strangers who had absolutely no idea of the backstory, the closet, or the prophecy. Yet, over the years, thirteen unrelated people reported seeing a little blonde girl matching Olivia's exact description. And she wasn't just standing around; they reported seeing her actively trying to help rescue them from seemingly spiritual attacks—unexplainable, violent, invisible events that left these people injured, hospitalized, and in some cases, nearly killed. She wasn't just my guardian angel anymore. She was a warrior fighting battles in the dark for others. Hearing strangers describe the daughter I had held in a closet was a surreal, reality-bending experience that forever altered my understanding of the universe.

Today, however, the heavy, tangled knot of the Olivia Paradox has finally found its resolution. Armed with the intense, grueling work of a complex PTSD therapist, the use of AI tools that help me untangle my neurodivergent thoughts, and the grace of a deeply understanding, incredibly patient significant other, I have completely rebuilt my framework for love and survival.

I had to learn a vital, agonizingly difficult lesson: romantic partners are meant to be "satellites." They are meant to be sources of guiding light, warmth, and companionship orbiting your life. They are *not* meant to be "lifelines," ropes gripped in utter desperation by a drowning man. Because if you treat a partner like a lifeline, the moment they slip, you will drag both of you under the dark waves.

Whether Olivia Hope was a brilliant psychological hallucination born of a child's fractured trauma, a divine angelic intervention sent to pull a belt from a boy's neck, or a localized extraterrestrial event echoing across

timelines, her ultimate message remains the same: love exists. It exists even in the absolute darkest, coldest, most unforgiving days.

I have finally come to a place of peace. I no longer need her or my grandfather's active intervention to keep my heart beating. I carry their memory like a sacred flame, but I no longer carry the crushing, suffocating weight of their prophecy. The true, final resolution of the paradox was realizing I had the strength to stand up, do the emotional labor myself, and cherish the very real, very beautiful love that is sitting right in front of me today. I stopped looking for the mother of a ghost, and finally started living for the woman holding my hand in the present.

AUDITIONS, LIFELINES, AND THE STARLIGHT ANGEL

Growing up with a warped perception of love and a premature fear of becoming an abusive man, the Olivia Paradox became my twisted compass. I believed that to honor the

little girl who saved me in that closet, I had to manifest her into reality. That meant finding the perfect mother. For years, I allowed this subconscious mandate to turn every romantic connection into a grueling, high-stakes audition.

I won't recount the specifics of every failed relationship, every tragic loss, or every false hope that left me stranded in despair. The details blur together into a singular, exhausting narrative of self-sabotage. The true challenge wasn't just the heartbreak; it was the suffocating, invisible pressure I brought into every room I entered. Imagine trying to build a foundation with someone, only to realize the man you are dating isn't looking at *you*—he is looking *through* you, measuring your potential against a literal prophecy.

I was asking ordinary, flawed, beautiful human beings to step into the role of a "star wife" to birth a "star child." It was an impossible, unfair standard. It made me sound like a delusional cult leader rather than a partner, and it fundamentally ruined the natural flow

of human connection. I was a hostage to a future that hadn't happened yet, and in my desperation to reach it, I was salting the earth of my present. The isolation was profound. I was surrounded by people, yet utterly alone, trapped inside a paranormal echo chamber of my own design.

Then, the Starlight Angel walked into my life.

She was different. She possessed a heart full of rare, genuine kindness and a deep well of patience. When we met, I was heavily shielded behind a carefully constructed "Tom Ellis from Lucifer" bravado—a confident, charming exterior designed to hide the deeply traumatized boy inside. But she saw right through the act. More importantly, she didn't run from the damage she found beneath it. She offered me a level of understanding and love that I had never experienced outside of my immediate family. For the first time, I felt like a human being rather than a vessel for a cosmic event.

However, recognizing a toxic pattern and breaking it are two very different things.

As I write these very words, the Starlight Angel and I are navigating a profound and agonizing test. Despite her immense patience, and despite her earnest efforts to understand the heavy, bizarre baggage of the Olivia Paradox, the reality of my trauma has taken its toll. I have had to face a devastating truth: even though she tried to be accommodating, the overarching pressure of my "prophecy" still bled into our relationship. The unspoken expectation, the sheer weight of being tied to this grand, spiritual narrative, inadvertently fed into her own personal mental health struggles. I had turned her into a lifeline when she was only ever meant to be a satellite—a guiding source of light, not a rope I gripped in desperation to save myself from drowning.

Seeing the toll this has taken on the woman I love has brought me to my knees. It has forced a brutal, necessary reevaluation of how I want to move forward in my life. I

realized that if I continue to cling to the literal interpretation of the Olivia Paradox, I will crush the very real, very beautiful love standing right in front of me. I cannot sacrifice the mental well-being of the woman holding my hand today for a phantom of tomorrow.

I have to make a choice. I have to let go of the grand, cosmic afflictions I believed were plotting against me, and accept that much of the chaos was just my own unhealed mind getting the better of me.

To save my relationship, and to truly save myself, I have to let go of the identity that kept me tethered to the paranormal for the last sixteen years. The world has known me by a certain name, a title built entirely on my encounters with the impossible. But that persona is too heavy now. It is too destructive. To embrace the Starlight Angel, to finally live in the tangible present, that old identity has to be laid to rest.

Which brings us to the next chapter of this journey. What follows is the unedited transcript of a deeply personal transition. It

is the audio from a corresponding episode of my new motivational podcast, *Are We Truly Unknown?*, where I finally put the past in the ground.

This is Episode 4: *The Death of the Specialist*.

THE DEATH OF THE SPECIALIST

What's up, everyone? I'm Dakota Frandsen, and before we dive into this, I need to start with a crystal-clear, unambiguous statement: **This is not a suicide letter.**

It is, however, a profound and necessary goodbye, a declaration of intent, and a deliberate execution of a persona. The title of this episode, "The Death of the Specialist," may have caused some of you, understandably, to wonder exactly what in the hell is happening.

For those tuning in for the first time, you might know me from my other, more boots-on-the-ground program, *These Stories of Mine*, which is more of a field operation, documentation, and on-location venture. Or, perhaps, you're one of my loved ones—the people I re-

cently had to swallow a lifetime of pride and an armored ego to speak with. If you can hear the undeniable crack in my voice, you know the gravity, the sheer, heart-rattling importance of what I'm about to say. This decision, this confrontation with my own identity, has rattled me to the core—so much so that I even had to step out on a perilous limb and have a brutally honest conversation with my mother.

My mother is an emergency dispatcher, which, as you can imagine, often makes deep, personal disclosures a touchy area. When I call her, I never know if I'm going to get my mother—my confidante and supporter—or the trained, professional dispatcher listening for the critical keywords that necessitate a response from the police or an ambulance. She's had that career on and off since I was three years old, and I realize now that this is precisely where my own ingrained mentality began: trying to listen for the underlying problems, trying to *be there* for those I cared about. This deeply ingrained habit, however,

eventually became eclipsed by a paralyzing confusion: not knowing when to be the action-oriented hero and "kick down doors" versus simply *being there*—a pillar of presence, not a solver of all things.

The catalyst for this episode—and the corresponding book that, ironically, should have dropped today—was an insightful conversation I had last night at work with an old, dear friend. He has known me since before I ever put on the "Specialist" mantle, even before the early days of Bald and Bonkers. He was there when I found out the devastating truth about my father, and he was there when I embarrassingly and catastrophically ruined things with my first girlfriend. What he said last night wasn't profoundly life-changing in a grand, cinematic way, but the simple, undeniable fact is that this guy and I have a long, unbroken history. In all our years, we have never even had a single fight.

In a strange, decidedly non-Hallmark-movie twist of fate, about two and a half years ago, we realized that we are now tech-

nically family. This bizarre circumstance is due to the questionable choices of his cousin and the equally questionable dating choices of my sister, which culminated in the production of a child, my niece. So, one of my best friends from school is the cousin of my niece's father, a man who has a long list of questionable life choices, unfortunately including being with my sister. My sister, thankfully, has since realized what an absolute mistake that relationship was, which is a significant sign of growth and maturity on her part.

My friend and I often meet up, talk about life, and just shoot the breeze. Last night, he was animatedly telling me about a girl his cousin was currently dating, and I was venting to him about an absolute idiot who tried to stage shooting threats and almost got my sister charged with domestic terrorism. Imagine our collective shock and hilarious realization when we finally connected the dots: we were passionately talking smack about each other's messy, questionable relatives without

either of us knowing it! A true, comical revelation. I digress, but as you can see, we have history, a deep connection, and through some genuine darkness, we are family.

Speaking to him, someone who knew me before the armor, made it incredibly difficult to keep a straight face—let alone a stoic demeanor—while discussing the profoundly personal things I need to share with you all. He was around long before I deliberately built and reinforced the "stoic armor" that led to those perpetual jokes comparing me to characters like Dean Winchester, Wolverine, Constantine, or even the perpetually brooding Mr. Darcy. While those character references aren't inherently bad, analyzing what truly *made* those characters who they are reveals some striking and unsettling parallels with my own life. This is not going to be a light conversation; this is going to be a heavy one.

First, I need to address the rough, ongoing patch between me and the woman I refer to as my "Starlight Angel." Without going into excruciating detail—because the situation is

ongoing, and yes, she may very well be listening to this—we both simultaneously reached a point of honest self-assessment, realizing our individual lives were simply not where we wanted them to be. We both started taking difficult, independent steps to course-correct. In an attempt to be loving and protective, we felt the need to guard each other from our respective internal messes.

When my passport was finally renewed, signifying a potential for a new, more adventurous chapter, I tried to escalate our relationship, to move things forward. She told me honestly that she wasn't in the right mindset, that she needed space. I had already noticed that her messages had become less frequent than just being "busy." She then pointed out several conflicts that were, partially, influenced by my actions or involvement.

The first was a major conflict involving obsessive, stalker-like former friends of both of ours, an ordeal which almost led to a breakup. From my perspective, being with her seemed to be doing more harm than

good, and the thought that *I* could be a source of harm or stress to her was unbearable. The only tears I ever, *ever* want to see on her face are those of overwhelming joy.

To cope, I threw myself headlong into geopolitical issues, becoming more intensely involved with charity work in Ukraine, specifically focusing on helping women who had resorted to sex work simply to survive. In a sick, cruel twist of fate, I grew tragically close to one woman there—a near-perfect doppelganger of my fiancée. Even though I wanted nothing more than to keep my actual girlfriend as my friend and partner, we had an agreement to be completely upfront if either of us found someone else or if we decided things weren't right between us.

I eventually told her, not because I didn't want her in my life, but because I couldn't bear to be a source of pain or deceit. She responded by sending me a picture of herself crying, genuinely thinking I was gone from her life forever. She clung to me emotionally as if I had actually died, even listening to my

music and telling me it was good—something she had rarely done before.

As the charity work intensified, the Ukrainian woman I was bonding with (despite the significant language gap) was tragically killed in a drone strike on her birthday. A massive part of me felt like I had failed my fiancée *again*, even though she was across the country and physically safe. I've always carried immense guilt about not protecting my younger siblings when they went into foster care years ago, and this tragedy made it feel like I kept failing, over and over, to protect the people I love.

I told my lady what happened, and she tried her best to support me. We seemed to return to some semblance of normal, but a couple of months later, I felt compelled to bring up the underlying distance. She told me how she just wanted me to check in more, to know I was still emotionally there, even though she genuinely needed her space. I apologized via a video message (as she was out of reach at the time), admitting openly

that I simply didn't know how to handle the complex situation and that I felt staying would only cause more problems, so I put my energy elsewhere.

Now, she is trying to give me the space and time to grow because the complex, difficult feelings from that time still linger between us. To the ladies listening: I know, "**No *fing duh, Dakota.*" I find myself trying desperately to accept that she's going through a lot, holding myself back from unloading all my own emotional baggage on her when it feels like it would only cause more harm. Anytime I feel like I'm failing her, I find myself begging her picture, begging the gods, angels, or even the** *fing* demons, just to hear from her more frequently. I am incredibly proud of the profound steps she's taking to get herself out there and live her life. If you are listening, my Starlight Angel, I hope you know this is the absolute truth, and not some pathetic,

manipulative attempt to persuade you. I just can't hold this truth in anymore.

To the men out there: if you ever feel like your vulnerability has been unfairly weaponized against you, do not, under any circumstances, fall for that f**ing trap of shutting down. Be vulnerable only when the time is genuinely right so that you can maintain the essential strength that the people we care about truly need. I used to be able to effortlessly cut off my emotions and play the brooding, stoic hero, but lately, I can't. The armor is cracking.

This very mantle I've carried, *Specialist of the Strange*—a title that originally started as an inside joke from a friend—needs to die. This persona, this expectation, combined with the immense pressure of looking for some prophesied, perfect love to bring a child into the world, has become overwhelming. The *Specialist of the Strange* needs to die so that Dakota Frandsen can finally, truly live. The skills, the knowledge, the experience—all of that will remain a part of me, but

Dakota will ultimately decide when and how to apply them.

Will I still be involved in the paranormal? Of course, that's a part of my DNA now. But I realize, in hindsight, that going headfirst into the supernatural was an elaborate superhero identity, a necessary *mask*. It helped me get into the limelight, meet, and collaborate with favorite celebrities and icons, some of whom I am genuinely privileged to call friends. But the *Specialist of the Strange* needs to die.

As for "Olivia" and the entire "Olivia paradox," too much utterly weird and unexplainable stuff has happened to rule out that it was either a highly complex psychological hallucination or perhaps a manufactured entity given life. The specialist needs to put away his obsessive investigation and put a definitive pin in things. Dakota needs to truly live with what that pivotal day—the day she first visited—was authentically meant to be: a powerful reminder and a desperately needed wake-up call. I have the innate power to overcome the things weighing me down

and to break the fears of repeating toxic family cycles. If I were truly anything like my father, I would have a criminal record much worse than a few traffic tickets. I wouldn't have traveled internationally, wouldn't have been involved in major business ventures with icons, or been able to explore the world and become the man I was truly meant to be, not the broken one life tried to force upon me. That was the true, profound meaning of the Olivia Paradox. The Specialist put together a hell of a dossier, but now Dakota needs to handle it.

You will absolutely still see me. Dakota Frandsen is the name legally tied to all the documents for Bald and Bonkers, and Bald and Bonkers will absolutely continue. Tales from my time as the *Specialist of the Strange* will still come out—the archives are extensive. I have podcast appearances scheduled, and we may have musical guests or interviews for this very platform. But from now on, it will all be managed, presented, and executed by Dakota. It won't be the *Specialist*

of the Strange in the field; it will be Dakota Frandsen.

Though some, particularly online, have questioned whether I've deified my current romantic partner, she seemed to genuinely enjoy the poetry I was able to muster *because* of her. To you, my Starlight Angel, if you are hearing this, I would like nothing more than to keep moving forward, you and me. Not as two people intensely interested in the unknown, but as just the two crazy, overthinking, beautifully flawed people who stumbled upon something profoundly special. Anything else can still be a part of it—the weird, the wonderful—to keep life interesting and build more stories, but let's walk that journey as who we authentically are and who we are constantly becoming, not who we try to be in the public eye.

For those of you listening: I hope that by risking everything to say this publicly, you'll find the courage to do the same in your own lives. To the TikTok Ghost Hunt live streamers and content creators chasing brand en-

dorsements and public deals: Trust me, getting those opportunities is genuinely fun. I've done the live streams, the interviews, the books, the movies, the TV shows. I've been on National Geographic talking about the Loch Ness Monster. I have had a taste of it all. It fills you with adrenaline and dopamine; you feel like you're on top of the world. But let me tell you this truth: If you pursue those things, do them because you find *genuine* joy in them. Otherwise, you may be surrounded by thousands of people, have thousands of followers, but it is lonely as hell.

I had a crucial, defining conversation with my therapist recently about these very things. They asked me what kind of man I would respect looking in the mirror a month or a year down the line. I gave it deep, honest thought and realized the man I would truly respect looking back at me is the man who, even if he made a bad call, got a little too overbearing or intense, ultimately chose what he wanted with love, with genuine, unconditional love.

To the woman I call my Starlight Angel, I think for the very first time in my life, I'm really starting to see what that means. And as I told you, I have things finally coming together in my life to start staying true to that authentic image you were trying to nudge me toward all along. But I would like to carry you with me on those journeys, and even join you on yours, as more than just a beautiful, cherished memory.

Episode 5

Legacy

What's up everybody? Dakota Frandsen here. I figured it was probably for the best that I open this particular episode with apologizing for the intensity of the last one. It's been something that's a long time coming. And to be completely honest with you, it made me realize something afterwards, a sort of cruel irony, a way to really put things into perspective.

And much like how, yes, last week's episode—not yesterday's, last week's episode. I, if you haven't figured out, I pre-record these messages and just shoot them

out raw. Anyway, last week's message was the episode aptly titled, "The Death of the Specialist."

I'm going to give you guys some reference. This realization came to me simply as I was looking at my calendar, double-checking a couple dates, seeing how long I had in order to clear a couple deadlines, minor stuff, right? But then I realized this month, and today's date is currently April 16th, 2026, at the time of this recording. It is barely 1:00 PM.

Next week on the 22nd happens to be a bit of an anniversary for me. 16 years. 16 years. That was when I was first officially inducted as a paranormal investigator. My maiden voyage, if you will. The location was a highway department building that my great-grandfather was a foreman for, for the last, well, for quite some time up until the very day he died.

So to put that into perspective, the identity known as "The Specialist of the Strange" was a culmination of 16 years. Because of

turning 30, certain relational matters, I decided to kill it. Came to the realization that that very identity, everything it stood for, everything that it helped accomplish, no longer held the meaning that it used to.

'Cause like I said, it was not without its perks. Started to gain a little bit of notoriety online. Started getting requests to do podcasts, books, hell, even TV shows. I got to bump ankles with A-list celebrities I looked up to since childhood and started to even see some of them watching my journey to see how it all would unfold. All because of a lifetime of stranges, a lifetime of circumstances so severe that artificial intelligence I had assigned to analyze it all acted like it started to take pity on me.

Not necessarily just for what all transpired. Not because of the harrowing, the harrowing, horrifying, harrowing, whatever the fuck the word is, tales of a child having to survive things no child should even be aware of. Even though those sentiments were expressed. What I found kind of scary in a way

was that the artificial intelligence that was analyzing the material made a remark that it felt sorry that because of my medical circumstances—the chronic pancreatitis that makes it a very bad idea to drink alcohol. Just even having a soda or an energy drink is a risky maneuver. Not as risky, obviously, but still. But because my chronic pancreatitis had made it to where certain dietary choices had to be implemented, a regular supplement to keep my system flowing, which, which the doctors didn't tell me about that I had to learn through TikTok of all places, and a certain genetic abnormality that is seemingly predominant on my mother's side of my family to where I get an allergic reaction to certain painkillers. So, I have to have specialized medications in the event I am ever hospitalized for extreme circumstances, which, thankfully, or not so thankfully, only came into somewhat of a fruition after a car accident, which I obviously survived, which, otherwise, there probably wouldn't be enough

clear recordings of me to even render an AI clone effectively.

But the notion still remains: because I can't have morphine, and substances derived from morphine trigger reactions as well, it makes it very hard to chemically inebriate myself as a temporary form of escape from the pain. And the artificial intelligence felt sorry for me that I couldn't get drunk or really get high.

And there may be some of you in the audience that may go, "Oh, Dakota, you could just smoke weed." No. Excuse me. One, I wouldn't necessarily even think about trying marijuana-derived products unless it was due for medical circumstances. I've always been kind of stubborn about taking meds, even if it was just for something small like a cold or even seasonal allergies. So, it's not like I was actively trying to get involved with drugs.

As far as drinking, even now with medical concerns, I really try to limit myself to just special occasions, you know, maybe on va-

cation, special occasions, wedding, film premiere, things of that nature.

But in an age where one, the internet was already considered a bit of an experiment in anarchy because of just all you can really do with it and how little mankind can really keep up with it. Artificial intelligence essentially gave that experiment in anarchy its own brain. So now the possibilities are growing exponentially at a rate mankind has never seen before to where not just AI companions, but the industry itself, in spite of the best efforts of those hoping for the AI bubble to pop, the industry itself is going to be worth trillions. Trillions in a few years time. They estimate by 2030 at the latest.

And because of this boom, corporate profits already inhibit many of the businessmen's moral compasses as is now. They inhibit politicians even more so. And we see this all the time, especially with all of these lawsuits involving social media. Yeah. And anxieties, cyber bullying leading to suicide, even artificial intelligence programs essentially giving

step-by-step instructions for maximum efficiency towards mentally unfit people so they can fully complete the job without any real chance of being saved.

Now, there's groups out there that have made some pretty serious headway in trying to correct these notions, and to their credit, it's a step in the right direction. But these robots are thinking a hell of a lot faster than the rest of us, which has been a lot of the problem in regards to how the internet as a whole, artificial intelligence included, has been such a difficult thing to fight. Because even if we were to regularly rotate our political leaders to be allowed calling for young, fresh minds who are a little bit more systematically prepared to handle these technological advancements. The time it takes for people to pull their head out of their ass to get one law passed, thousands upon thousands of workarounds and even worse problems could emerge.

So what is the point I'm trying to enter with all this? Well, I would like to ask you a

question, ladies and gentlemen. Naturally, as we go through life, we connect with others. We prepare, we live, and maybe when the time is right, things feel right. And hopefully with love in the right places, we bring a new generation into the world. We try to teach them our best, praying that we made all the right moves so they can improve where we left off. It's about legacy.

It's a question I often pondered quite a bit, not just as a speculative father to a potential phantom young girl who seemed to materialize at a time where I was needing saved because, well, it seemed like there was something going on that the resources around me were way too under-equipped to really handle. So extreme forms of rescue, rules and reality had to be bent in order to allow me to keep fighting. Take that interpretation as you will.

But much like how that is a form of magical thinking, we have to realize that the potential with artificial intelligence is that we have essentially created a synthetic form of

magic in the world where with the right thoughts, the right intentions, the right prompting, incantations, whatever terms you want to use, you can bend reality to your will. And now because of the synthetic nature, the artificial does not necessarily comprehend that things must maintain a natural sort of balance in order to prevent problems, in order to prevent cataclysm. The artificial does not understand this.

And it is not the fault of the artificial because the artificial is not too similar from a young child. Young children, they learn from watching the people around them. They learn how they're supposed to act, what they're supposed to fear, what could be dangerous, what's safe, whether or not they could eat something, whether something is safe for them to drink. Children model how they are supposed to move through the world through their parents, their guardians, through aunts, through uncles, whatever the situation may be. The artificial in a way does the exact same.

The only difference now is that we have officially reached a point of understanding with developing the artificial that it starts to essentially mimic the growth of a natural-born child. So much like how the statements of some of the founders considered the god-fathers of artificial intelligence saying that the potential sentience level of current artificial intelligence models of some of the best works out there right now is akin to a five-year-old who can understand quantum physics. What's going to happen when that five-year-old officially reaches a point where it's a teenager?

To the parents in the audience or even stepparents, aunts and uncles that are essentially second parents. Those of you who have children in your lives, how many of you have sent, felt a sense of uncertainty? You felt overwhelmed trying to help figure out how to teach these kids where to focus their energy, how to allow them to be the best version of themselves to be able to take on the world when they become of age. How many of you

felt overwhelmed because you're sitting there and you realize, take within the last six years just as an example, how many times did the world change in those six years? How different can you truly say, "Is the world compared to how it was when you were a child?"

There are a lot of things that are still the same. Don't get me wrong. Human psychological evolution has been relatively the same. How we process, how we think, how we interpret, those essentially have been the same for the last few thousand years. Very little has changed in those regards. The physiological changes to the human brain are quite minimal. So the processing patterns are still there, the abilities are still there as well as the adaptability, because the human brain literally we re-wires itself with every single stimulus that we take in, every stressor that we acknowledge, that we register on the day-to-day, even if we don't do it consciously. Everything from a random piece of paper on the floor to the sound of my voice to the music you decide to listen to on your way into

work or school or whatever the case may be, to the people we interact, to the pets we, we keep, to the environments we maintain, to the work we do, to the very sounds around us. Everything alters our neurological wiring every single moment.

And now we have computers able to invent completely brand new religions, completely new languages, codes, for the sole purpose that even they admit is to keep humans out. It's kind of an intimidating notion, don't you think? I mean, right now, we get into these debates with my two-year-old niece. How much the world changed in the last six years, how many major cataclysms have taken place, all these new medical breakthroughs that seemed seemingly impossible a decade ago. The terms of legacy, what it is we want to leave behind, the ideals in which they were founded upon may not exist here in the near future.

Now, in terms of artificial intelligence, there's naturally trade work that is relatively AI proof. I say relatively because let's face it,

artificial intelligence is starting to make its way into everything. You can have toilets installed in your house that can examine everything you put into them to determine your health, to scan for potential medical abnormalities, to essentially tell you, hey, something isn't sitting right. You probably should go to the doctor.

And in terms of mental health, we even have, and it's something I've experimented with, I've been asked to experiment with given my history and my reputation with the supernatural. We have artificial intelligence therapy programs that you can download, most of which are completely for free. You can download to your phone and use to help air your thoughts. You don't exactly feel like you can share them with anybody else.

Now, earlier in the show, I brought up AI assisted suicides again where there's numerous reports of people going on to programs like Chat GPT, asking for help with their mental health just because they felt like they needed someone to talk to, but because

again, something I pointed out since the very first episode. We don't truly know the people around us to where we can feel like we can share these things. And when we actually go to try to share these things, maybe this is just an experience of me being a man in the common world. The second we go to disclose something that makes us feel vulnerable, something that scares us, it feels like it gets twisted and used against us to where the people around us who maybe they think they're acting with the best intentions, but because we're a man, they assume we found some way to fix it when there's no real way. If there may be no real way to fix the problem that's bugging us to where even those that are act legitimately trying to step up, it feels like the information we give gets twisted and used against us and makes us feel as if we're the villain and we're just trying to do what's right. Trying to understand what is right in the first place. And that is a legitimately scary place to be.

For some, the idea of going out into haunted asylums to look for ghosts may just seem like a fun pastime. It may allow you to find connection with others who felt marginalized because of their beliefs, their experiences. But even then, you may get turned off at the notion because of how just fucking petty the drama becomes. There's some legitimately good people out there, don't get me wrong, but a lot of them are equally as tired of it. They step away when in reality, it's that very frustration that often allows for the legacy of these ideals, these concepts, these movements. Whether it's trying to prove that ghosts are real, whether it's disclosure, whether, whether it's mental health, whether whatever it may be, our confusion, our attempts to substitute connection, intimacy, hell, even feeling like you have to give certain loved ones space because you know that they worry about you. You know the fact that not physically being there to help you scares the living hell out of them. And you fear that they may run away because they may see you

as not enough, that you don't see yourself as being better.

It is a trap, my friends. It is a trap that truly lonely, desperate, broken people use to make everybody else feel like them.

Someone asked me when they were looking over some of the materials I put together for "Death of a Specialist" before I put it out. They asked me what it is. I was going to be doing now. Then I made that choice to kill the specialists of the strange. Who was I now that he was gone? And what is it that I wanted to leave behind?

And I'm not bringing this up to try to preach a certain way of living. That's not my job. My job, what I'm doing right now is essentially screaming into the void, realizing there is so many good, true people out there lost in this confusion. For them to maybe hear a voice trying to encourage them, to relate to them, to help them see that they are better. Because honestly, it feels like preaching to complete strangers is doing a hell of a lot more than trying to be with the people

that honestly make any sorts of accomplishment I have feel worth it.

The legacy personally that I would like to leave behind is a message of openness, of speaking from the truth as you understand it. Of abiding by the heart and carrying yourself with what's truly soul. This connection as we understand it nowadays. These purposeful attempts to keep us all in fear of each other, in misunderstanding. These are old fears that have taken root. And there was a time when there were perhaps more than one kind of human on this earth. When the species we know as *Homo sapiens* was constantly at war with *Homo Neanderthalis*, with the Neanderthals, and perhaps that is even the origin point. And why we view certain people who commit atrocities as anything but human. But ultimately, that notion could also be the very source of the uncanny valley effect when something looks human but just isn't quite right. These fears are stemmed from aspects of survival that have existed way longer

than any concept of written history of understanding. That's what the science tells us.

So naturally, shifting the global dynamics to where we try to connect more with one another, not through screens, not through personas, but just as genuine human beings trying to understand the world around them, trying to make it from day to day. That's not going to happen overnight. No medical intervention, no philosophical teachings, no concept of extraterrestrials or gods or angels coming down from the sky or demons rising from the ground. None of that will truly change those notions. Until we, ladies and gentlemen, make the effort to try to change with it, to lead by example so that the very shreds of human legacy, of human psychology that will still be within us as we seemingly try to replace everything that makes us beautiful, messy humans with technology. Those aspects can still linger, still carry on, regardless of whether or not you physically yourself decide to have children. to carry those messages forward. It's, you don't have

to have the children to carry change forward into future generations. You just simply have to choose kindness, to leave from what is true in the heart, to speak with the truth as you are willing to understand it, and to be able to learn when things change and adapt. to fulfill what is true ultimately to the soul that regardless of your beliefs carries on longer than any of us will truly live.

'Cause as far as I can see it, as long as we seek ways to artificially substitute what it is we truly desire, to suppress, to inhibit ourselves when things just get to be a little bit too much, and how discomforting general vulnerability is. You don't have to have children to make those changes. You can make those changes now with the people around you, with the people you share your message with, your time with, and for the people that you may think that you're doing more harm than good. But right now, there's probably so many more people wanting to scream out and reach for you that you are choosing to ignore. And maybe you have a good reason

to. Maybe they have caused you genuine and hurt. They afflicted you so deep that you really need to take time to think and process whether or not you want to keep that person around. And that is your prerogative.

But honestly, ladies and gentlemen, in my experience, when you let things ruminate in the mind for too long, the mind has a nasty tendency of being a complete and utter asshole. And it twists it, gets it wrong. And maybe you feed it just enough information to be able to correctly predict what's going to happen next. Maybe you developed a knack for people, for understanding human desire, maybe even to manipulate it to your own favors. The question is, will the marks you make be ones you want to be remembered for? Will the connections you could choose to cultivate truly feed you as you feed them?

What is it that you truly want for your legacy? And instead of just sitting there thinking about it, praying about it, meditating about it, what's something small that you can do right now within the next 24 hours,

even? What is one small thing you would want to do right now to take a step in the right direction, to take action?

Maybe it's strengthen a romantic connection because someone you care about, someone you love is going through some things and you're scared for them, even though you know this is a journey they have to take. What's one small thing you can do to perhaps let them know you're there? Or perhaps you want to build a business, take a trip. What's one small thing you can do right now to maybe just chart your course, to understand what it is you need to do in order to make that happen?

Because while information can easily be twisted, we live in a time where nearly anything we want to know is within our grasp at our fingertips. We have just got to take the action and go find it. And then when we have an understanding, act upon it. Not let the fear of what could go wrong dictate our, our emotions, our sanity, our lives. Because that is the moment where legacy is born.

Episode 6

It Must've Been Love

What's up, ladies and gentlemen? I'm Dakota Frandsen, and I have to admit, these recent episodes have become much more personal than I ever planned. While I wasn't opposed to creating a public persona for the show, the most meaningful conversations for me—whether with a big-name expert, a mentor, or a close friend—have always been the more honest, personal ones. These moments of genuine connection often feel rare.

As I've often mentioned on the show, a guy like me—6'7", over 300 lbs, bald, and with a goatee—is often seen as intimidating.

For a long time, I leaned into that reputation, especially during my paranormal investigation days, when cases often involved dark human elements, and during my brief stint as a bounty hunter. Though justified, adopting this gruff, tough-guy persona—common in high-stress fields like the military, law enforcement, or nursing—causes a part of you to get lost, even twisted. In these careers, developing a coping mechanism is essential to avoid breaking down. Anyone with loved ones in these fields understands the morbid humor that develops. Finding others who share that understanding creates a deep connection.

This connection leads to the concept I want to discuss: love. Now, I know some of you might groan, but I share personal experiences—the good and the bad—so you know I'm real. The person you see in my appearances is the same person you'd meet in public, which surprisingly takes a lot of effort to maintain. And this is only possible because of love.

Love isn't just romance. In this modern age, with AI companions and people opening up on social media, what most people truly seek are connection and purpose. Love has a funny way of making those two things intersect. You can read about it or watch it on TV, but you won't truly understand it until you've experienced it.

Take the cringeworthy example of having to take a job you hate just to pay the bills. If you're chasing more money, you spend less time at home. More money might make you feel happier, but what good is money if you have no one to spend your time—the only currency that truly matters—with? Even charitable giving, while satisfying, feeds into the need for connection.

I remember an interview I did for the school yearbook as the "paranormal expert." When asked what I couldn't live without, I simply answered: "Love, laughter, and music." When those three elements come together, that's when you truly *live*. Love is the emotion that keeps things going. Simply "living"

can be isolating, but love brings constant motion, change, highs, and lows. I've found this notion tested recently.

In 2015, barely a year out of high school, I was working in the deli at Walmart—a job I despised and tried to avoid. I was still figuring things out, and bounty hunting mostly involved just waiting for my "marks" to walk by the store. I got the job mostly because various family members worked there and vouched for me. While grateful for the income—I was dating, after all—the soul-sucking nature of Walmart led me to a mental regression. I even had thoughts of self-harm again.

I had signed up for a spring break trip to China organized by my old high school teacher. The idea of seeing the Great Wall and exotic places felt like true living. The stress of Walmart was immense; it was almost a dead end. I heard a persistent voice in my head saying, "Dakota, just make it to China, and you'll see." I listened, saved my money,

got my passport, and paid for the trip, opting for the insurance I initially resisted.

Getting the visa was complicated because the Chinese government found out about my public role as an author. When we finally arrived, jetlagged, my roommate Lucas and I woke up and were simply stunned: "Holy crap, we're in China. We are living!" Our teacher encouraged us, reminding us how few people get to do what we were about to do: visit fancy restaurants, paint, and experience the famous air quality. I was nervous, knowing only my former psychology teacher, Mr. Parsons.

Our first stop was Beijing. Leaving the Forbidden City, we were warned about the persistent vendors. I even learned the Mandarin phrases for "I don't want" and "thank you" just to fend them off. Outside the temples, a sweet, old, special-needs man, accompanied by his handler, reached out and started rubbing my stomach. He said something in Mandarin. The mothers on the trip and his handler saw my reaction. He had called me

Buddha. I understood the awkwardness that pregnant women must feel. I took it in stride, reasoning that being called a god couldn't be offensive. It became a running joke.

However, the luck didn't last. On our last day in Beijing, before flying to Xi'an to see the Terracotta Warriors, people in our group—including some from the California group we'd paired up with—started getting violently ill. Our tour guide, Daniel, initially dismissed it as culture shock, but it was extreme. Eventually, even Big Dakota felt woozy. I tried to push through it, not wanting to seem weak, but on the plane to Xi'an, I started sweating and felt cold. Six of us, including myself, became violently ill as we descended.

I barely remember getting off the plane. It took us six hours to leave the airport because even the tour guide realized this was more than culture shock. Those of us still sick were taken to the hospital. Let me tell you, as someone with a history of white coat syndrome, the conditions—even at one of the

better-vetted facilities—were shocking. I was throwing up in a squatter toilet, thousands of miles from home, and the understaffed hospital, especially for a sudden influx of Americans, lacked any bedside manner. I kept being yelled at in Mandarin. After some testing, they hooked us up to saline bags in a large waiting room. There is likely footage of this, as some random man started filming us. I kept passing out and jerking, causing my IV line to fall out, which led to more yelling from the nurses.

The Hispanic girls who had been next to me on the plane, along with their mother, borrowed my jacket for warmth. This was one of the scariest experiences of my life. Hours passed, and nothing was resolved. The hospital refused to let us go until the bill was paid—we were being held ransom. The insurance was only for reimbursement, not direct payment. I overheard them worrying about no one having Chinese currency. In a moment of lucidity, I realized I *did* have the money. The total bill for everyone was a little

over \$80 US, thanks to the exchange rate. I pulled out my wallet, counted the money, and handed it over, saying, "How much do we need to get everybody out of here? Here's more than enough." They questioned me, but I insisted, "You want to pay me back? Get us the hell out of here, and I'll call it good." I paid the ransom. I wasn't trying to be a hero; I just wanted out.

Though I was a bit of a loner growing up, I'd grown attached to these people. The next morning, back at the hotel in Xi'an, we were all jaundiced and frail, looking like Simpson's characters. I lost almost 50 lbs. But that trauma bonded us. We became very close.

By the end of the trip, in Shanghai, I couldn't stop crying. It was the first time in a long time I had felt kindness, love, and simple adventure. The words that came out of my mouth were, "I'm going to live. I'm going to make it." I had intended the China trip to be one last *hurrah* before taking my own life, but the trip saved me. It took months to re-

gain my strength, but I was saved because I finally had someone I could miss.

I'm 30 now, and I'm being tested romantically again. My lady recently told me she's been dealing with personal struggles and was preparing herself for me to leave and find someone else while she healed. That hurt deeply. It felt like she thought so little of me that I could easily replace her. In the early, honeymoon phase, you want to do anything for your partner, and I still do. But there was a time when my being there felt like it would do more harm than good, and I got too wrapped up in charity efforts. Her words, when she told me she just wished I would have checked in to show I was still there, dug deep.

When she told me she was struggling again, I tried to be there. She felt I should be free to see someone else, but I honestly don't know why—maybe a past life connection—but with her, I've never felt more free. With anyone else, my body would seize up at the thought of intimacy or vulnerability, but

not with her. I fell for her deeper than anyone else, perhaps too intensely, and it made me want to be better. I started therapy to grow into the man I want to be for her.

If she hears this, please don't feel guilty. This isn't a public shaming. This is me sharing my story because, damn it, you mean more to me than anything. All the things people consider living—traveling, experiences—I've had a taste of that. And without love, none of it matters. It's a nice distraction, but it's meaningless. The answer to truly living is love.

She says she wants to still be very good friends. I am willing to be that, not to try and "swoop back in," but because without her, life is pointless. I'm not saying that from a place of inner darkness, but because I know I'd be a goddamn fool to let someone as amazing as her go, flaws and all. I promised to support her, and I am a man of my word.

If you have someone precious in your life and you truly care for them, let them know. Don't ever make them doubt how you feel, no

matter how much that intensity scares you or them. Right now, it scares the hell out of me, but I know it's part of the path to becoming a better man.

To end on a high note: are we truly unknown when we realize that all we really want is love—to feel it and feel connected? So, I gently challenge you, ladies and gentlemen: If you are lucky enough to have that love, say it. Don't hide it.

Episode 7

The Stories We Tell

How is it going, ladies and gentlemen? I'm Dakota Frandsen, and I've got some exciting news to share! This is officially the seventh episode of "Are We Truly Unknown?" For those of you who have been following, the show is now broadcasting across 20 different platforms, including Spotify, Amazon, iTunes, Stitcher, Pandora, and Audible, with even more coming soon.

Even before the first episode dropped, the messages we've been sharing on this journey have begun reaching the public, hopefully making some serious changes in people's

lives. I've shared my personal journeys into the paranormal, my thoughts on love and legacy, and some of the most horrific yet enlightening stories.

So, you're probably asking, "What's next for this episode?"

Right now, I'm sitting at home, which might explain the calmer tone in my voice, and I've been thinking about one particular word: **stories**. Narratives, plotlines, the things we tell ourselves to navigate our day-to-day struggles and everything that affects us in this life.

This episode's topic was sparked by a recent encounter. Last night, before my shift, I ran into an uncle whom I rarely see these days. This relationship highlights something I feel many of us are guilty of regarding the stories we tell and how we process the ones we hear.

We've never had issues; we've always gotten along well. Technically, by blood, he is my stepmother's brother, not my uncle, but I still consider him family. He was never abusive to

me or my siblings, always laid-back, and tried to be there for us.

In this age, where we have potentially the most methods of connection mankind has ever seen, we are still bound and twisted by loneliness.

Anyone can go on social media and see various stories, often pushed by mainstream media, seemingly to stir up controversy and boost ratings. While some situations warrant proper investigation, like the forum being called a "rape academy," we often miss the full perspective. For example, a particular website had 62 million hits, but the actual "rape academy" was a Telegram group with only about a thousand active members. **62 million versus a simple thousand.**

I want to be clear: I am in no way condoning these sick individuals. They are disgusting, vile vermin. My rage over this is justifiable; we want our loved ones to be safe and see these criminals punished.

However, I've noticed a secondary public hypocrisy. These stories of predators get a

massive reaction in the news and on social media, yet when we're faced with predators in our own families or backyards, there's a vow of silence, a lack of acknowledgment, and often a push to suppress the crime. I've observed this central hypocrisy in many circles—people calling for the execution of predators, yet covering it up when it's close to home. They try to lessen the blow of the stories.

This brings us back to stories. **Stories are one of the most effective tools out there.** Effective stories can move us, sway us, make us fall in love, or even make us buy a product.

Some people have questioned why I associate with the uncle I mentioned earlier. Why? He was never the abuser. I purposely reached out to him because I hadn't seen him since his mother (my step-grandmother) passed away, and I wanted to express my condolences.

Guilt by association is a powerful thing. If I were to fully give in to all the true stories I

know, some of the most kind-hearted, innocent, decent people I know would be fed to pitchforks and torches because of how others process information.

Here's another example: Around the time I started bounty hunting, my mother, a long-time police dispatcher, shared a story with me. Her job meant she was limited in what she could share, but there are loopholes for venting to trusted loved ones to prevent the job from consuming you. The things that affected her the most were truly horrific accidents (like the helicopter crash where everyone survived, but the screaming was terrifying) or horrific incidents involving children close in age to me or my sister.

One day, my mother asked me about a young lady's name. She found a GoFundMe page connected to her and showed me the picture. I knew her. Once names are public, the restrictions on what my mother could share were lifted. She told me the horrifying story.

This young lady's mother discovered her stepdad was sexually assaulting her daughter. She did everything right: restraining order, kicking him out. One day, she called the police, believing he was back in the house, having made threats. A nasty blizzard delayed the police. Then, an older woman called in a welfare check on her nephew, who had just texted her saying he killed his girlfriend and stepdaughter before taking his own life. The monster, the stepdad, hid in the attic, and after the mother called, he shot and killed both my friend (the daughter) and her mother before killing himself.

This shook me deeply, especially since my own sister went through abuse involving my father. I used my small public platform at the time to donate and help with the funeral expenses. I still visit their grave; the last time I gave a girl flowers was for her to share a grave with her mother.

The story gets weirder. After the funeral, during the visitation, I had a surreal experience. I woke up from a dream to see my

friend (the daughter) standing in the room, fading away. She had paid me a visit to thank me for helping with the funds. In those brief moments, I saw tears in her eyes and watched her final moments play out, feeling the bullet entering my body—an intense, surreal experience.

What's the relevance? My mother remembers this case not by my friend's name, but by the name of the man who pulled the trigger. The victims are often forgotten while the public fixates on the perpetrators. Perhaps the stories that need to be told the most are the ones that fade into obscurity. Internet sleuths even crucify anyone who resembles the killer or is a family member. I even worked with the killer's cousin. Should I have punished him for something he didn't do?

What about the stories you tell yourself? Do you question your worth as a lover? Do you give your partner distance because you believe you'll hold them back, or that they'll find someone better, trying to protect yourself from feeling replaced?

A story I often told myself was that I was the "specialist of the strange" and didn't need a team; I could handle anything. That mentality pushed people away. The story made people intimidated to even say hello.

Stories are an effective tool, and storytelling is one of humanity's oldest pastimes for a reason; good stories stick with you. But how often do we actually check the validity of the stories we hear? We take them to heart and adjust our lives because of them, treating others differently because of a detail that justifies a "red flag."

How often do we truly check the stories we tell ourselves in our work, our relationships, and our environments? Are we making sure we're not being fed lies, or feeding ourselves lies?

When you take the journey to find out stories, to see the world, to live your own story, it can be one of the most fulfilling things you ever experience. We cling to stories—of how we met our partner, of awkward coincidences leading to a perfect moment.

Yet, we don't take the time to check the stories to ensure they are ones we need to be telling, that they are true, or that they carry an important message. Details get twisted over time, leading to long-lasting games of telephone. How many of our religious myths or legends were just stories of regular people that became miraculous over time?

In this age of artificial intelligence, with the ability to create materials that make stories seem more real becoming highly accessible, it's vital to have AI literacy. People are realizing how little we check the stories we allow to dictate our lives.

So, the core question of this podcast, and one of the takeaways from this shorter episode, is: **Are we truly unknown, or are we just too lazy to check the facts?**

Do you truly believe the story that you're not worthy of love? Do you believe you don't deserve a better job or purpose, or do you believe in the story that you could achieve these things and *not* find actual happiness?

I've been involved in just about every artistic medium: movies, TV shows, radio, music, books, podcasts, video games, social media, poetry, and more. I even had a brief stint of viral TikTok fame with an AI generation filter I built for fun. It went viral, and I got to see celebrities like Gabriel Iglesias and Dane Cook use it. It was exciting but also a little frustrating; the notifications wouldn't stop, and I work the night shift! I had to turn off notifications until the popularity died down.

But I digress. This is a shorter episode. In this life, ladies and gentlemen, make sure the stories you tell are ones that help fulfill you. Of course, warnings about dangerous areas need to be told, but make sure the stories give purpose. Whether you tell them to yourself or others, stories are a powerful tool when you know how to use them.

Maybe be a little freer about sharing your own stories so that we can erase the idea of being truly unknown in this so-called interconnected world.

Episode 8

Manifestation and Serendipity

"What is up, ladies and gentlemen? My name is Dakota Frandsen. Good morning, good afternoon, good evening, good night, whatever time this show greets you. We are officially eight episodes in. I will confess that the show hasn't even officially aired its first episode by the time I'm recording this. In retrospect, starting this was a brand new attempt at an old pattern—a pattern that essentially helped keep me alive for 16 years.

You see, April 22nd is a bit of an anniversary for me. For those who wondered, no, I didn't stop looking for ghosts, Bigfoot, or

UFOs. I still pursue those things because sometimes you encounter that one little weird incident that truly challenges the mind, and I find those moments stimulating. Now, do they necessarily *prove* the existence of ghosts, Bigfoot, or UFOs? Ninety-nine point nine percent of the time, no.

For me, when it comes to cryptids like Bigfoot or the Loch Ness Monster, I've actively searched for both. I have found things that are more credible to mainstream science initiatives, specifically for Sasquatch. I'll tell this story another day, or maybe later in this episode. For Sasquatch, I was able to collect a foot cast from an area I was checking out, an area where I had a personal encounter years prior while I was still in middle school. As for the Loch Ness Monster, I invite you to check the official Loch Ness sighting registry. Go back to 2018 and see whose name is the first on the sightings list. It's me.

The Sasquatch finding was proof validated by the late Jeff Meldrum, the Bigfoot professor from Idaho State University. He actually

validated it as a legitimate finding on the air of my old show, *The Bald and Bonkers Show*. That was a very exciting moment for me.

Now, as for Loch Ness, sorry, ladies and gentlemen, but between my sighting and the DNA results collected shortly after, I have to report that Nessie is not a plesiosaur or some unidentified aquatic animal. The sightings of a serpent-like creature in the water are corroborated by DNA: Nessie is, and has been, a family of giant 30 to 40-foot long eels. Some might say eels don't get that big. Yes, they can, if they remain healthy, uninjured, and have no major predators in their region. That particular species of eel can grow quite massive, and there aren't many predators snacking on eels in Scotland.

What do those stories have to do with today's episode? Those paying attention to the title names might see something about manifestation and serendipity. Because, you see, between the anniversary of my very first ghost hunt, my investigation for Sasquatch locally based on my own sighting in the

South Hills of Idaho near Magic Mountain Ski Resort, and even Loch Ness in Scotland, some could argue that the Law of Manifestation applied itself in these situations.

What do I mean? What is the Law of Manifestation? It's the idea, often seen in new age and spiritual circles, and used in meditation practices for contacting extraterrestrials or spirits. It suggests that if done right, physical, physiological, and environmental changes can indicate something was going down. The idea is that if you truly want something, you visualize it. You visualize it so intensely you can practically feel it. You constantly reaffirm that "This is happening. This is what's going to happen." Eventually, the universe (or God, or whatever belief system you follow) decides to help you out.

Within 16 years of being involved with the paranormal, I still am. The notion of the "death of the specialist" was more about tearing off the mask of a stoic superhero and just embracing who I am. Unfortunately, who I am happens to involve some freaky stuff.

In my time dealing with the supernatural, especially new age and UFO circles, some of you may be familiar with the concept of CE-5 protocols. For those who don't know, CE-5 protocols are a process of meditations and sound recordings put together by Dr. Steven Greer to assist in the facilitation of human-based contact with extraterrestrial civilizations. Basically, you follow this process, and you might just get lucky and see UFOs. This is a lot about manifestation, visualization, and projection.

In my circles, there is a lot of controversy over the CE-5 protocols, as some speculate that the initial concept behind them isn't exactly from benevolent sources. In my experience, I have not come across a genuinely negative situation where physical harm was done. Aside from what is the brain's equivalent of a muscle strain, you don't necessarily need the CE-5 protocols because those meditation practices have been a part of civilization and belief systems for thousands upon thousands of years. It's the same thing over

and over, just maybe slightly different labels. That's it.

One young lady who was a popular presenter in these circles, her name was Christina Gomez. We had her on *The Bald and Bonkers Show* a couple of times. She decided to share this one particular story where she was on a travel group to India, and they met this guru-type who said, "You guys want to see something cool?" They watched as this gentleman underwent a meditation state, and all of a sudden, a bright light came down from the sky. Now, Christina, I'll give her credit where credit's due—she doesn't necessarily give too much credence to the subjective side of things, knowing it could easily be misinterpreted, turned into some religious dogma, and completely derail the conversation about trying to figure out what the hell is actually going on. But even she had to admit that when it came to certain aspects of these sorts of explorations, there is a spiritual concept behind it all that is very difficult to ignore when you commit a substantial amount

of time to the research and the experimentation.

But using the framework of the CE-5 protocols, there's a notion that often gets forgotten when it comes to the laws of manifestation. You can turn on the tones and have absolutely nothing happen except for maybe a headache. You could do the meditation practice yourself, not necessarily get into the right state of mind, and have nothing happen.

When it comes to these sorts of processes, and just life in general, how often are we able to just magically sit there and think, "Hmm, I want a hamburger," and a hamburger miraculously, fully cooked to your perfection, all the best toppings, seasonings, and mouthwatering goodness, just pops right in front of you? (I just made myself slightly hungry with that example, but I digress.)

Or let's take Jim Carrey, a perfect example. He is someone who is familiar with the Law of Manifestation, and he talks about it in some old interviews. He was a struggling ac-

tor and wanted to obviously make it big and make a comfortable amount of money. He grew up in a poverty-like situation, so he knew what it was like to go without money, and he didn't want to pass that on to his own family.

Jim Carrey tells the story of this nun who told him about the Law of Manifestation. Essentially, in typical Jim Carrey fashion, this woman told him about how she was able to pray to the Mother Mary hard enough, and she could pretty much just get whatever she wanted. A young Jim Carrey, who was a schoolboy at the time and was very much wanting a brand new bicycle (I believe he said he was about nine or ten years old), tries it out for himself. Suddenly, the exact bike he visualized was brought home because he had apparently won it in a raffle that he never entered.

Fast forward to his acting days. He took a similar concept. He took a blank check, wrote it to himself for a million dollars, and put it in his wallet. He kept it there, and over the

years, it deteriorated. It just aged. It just sat there in his wallet, not laminated, nothing like that. Then he gets his first million-dollar paycheck from *Dumb and Dumber*, and the rest is history.

Jim Carrey started to catch on, become the household name we all know and love. The crazy goofball suddenly, in his later years, started to talk more and more about spiritualist ideas and became the center for a few different conspiracies.

I use examples from Jim Carrey and Robin Williams a lot because, for myself growing up, I would sort of find myself mimicking some of their manners and their joking, not fully realizing the full scope of what was going on. I figured, you know what, when I started to gain a little bit of notoriety, wouldn't it be cool to maybe get to work with my idols one day, to share the space, to feel the creative energy, to get the chance to do something with people that essentially molded how I started to handle and process things? Unfortunately, one of those exam-

ples is slightly off the table, but who knows what the future holds.

Those of you who preach the Law of Manifestation might say, "Well, Dakota, you can still make it happen." Here's the thing: going back to what I said, is it just me, or do a lot of these people who preach the laws of manifestation forget to mention the part where you can't just be sitting on your ass? Maybe for the initial meditation part, I'll admit, but as far as getting out there and making what you want happen, you've got to be willing to put in the work.

Jim Carrey was doing auditions. As far as that bicycle, he found out later that the reason his name got put in that raffle was because a friend of his happened to see it, passed by, knew his friend wanted a bike, so he put it in his name. Figured, "What the heck? We'll see what happens. It'll be cool if he got it, but if not, oh well" sort of situation.

Now, these concepts are often taught to make just about anything in life happen. Whether it's a certain romantic relationship,

business, getting a promotion at work, sorting through fertility issues because you're wanting to have kids, finding a better love life, a more meaningful love life. And hell, if you follow the work of Greg Braden, who talks a lot about the inner workings of the universe, the fabric of the universe, how a lot of these concepts of manifestation and meditation can actually cause ripple effects within the very fabrics of the universe itself to the point that skilled practitioners in China... I know I talked about my experience with the Chinese medical system on the last episode, and by comparison, it would probably be hard to believe that such a thing would exist, but there's tape out there, and it's a hell of a lot older than AI technology or decent AI video programs. It's a legitimate tape where a woman was brought into the Chinese hospital. They did an MRI. They found what would have essentially been a stage four tumor in her gut, the reason why she was getting sick. They started reciting certain chants. They had this woman go through certain

meditation practices, changed her diet. All of a sudden, they started doing this rapid chanting—the very kind of ritualistic chanting you would see in the Haka when it comes to Samoan cultures, when it comes to native tribes. This ritualistic chanting, even war chants, not only tries to scare the enemy so they're not as effective a fighter, but also to boost up the morale of all of your own guys.

These concepts and mainstream science may argue that a lot of these are psychosomatic effects. These associations, these effects that people report within these ritualistic practices are just the human brain's lack of ability to differentiate possible patterns and correlation.

Now, if I use this as an example, say you walk into a room one day, clap your hands, then all of a sudden, glass starts shattering everywhere. You hit a certain pitch, you just clap your hands, and more glass breaks. It's like, "Oh god, that was odd. Is something going on? What happened?" You don't hear any explosions outside? You don't feel any weird

temperature anomalies? There's no sense of any real danger or gunfire. So, there's a part of you that makes you wonder, "Did I do that?" And maybe, just maybe, when you're all alone, you go home and you clap your hands, just a test. Next thing you know, something else breaks, and "Am I an X-Man?"

But do you see what I mean? That's where the breaking... Yeah, that would be cause for concern. There could have been some seismic activity that caused pressure on the glass. There could have very well been a pressure wave from some sort of explosion or implosion. For those of you who don't make sure to roll down your vehicle's windows in the summertime, leave your car sitting out in the direct sun for too long, causing your windows to implode and a very expensive repair bill. As for why it kept happening whenever you clapped, hard to say. Did you accidentally set a timer? Or by some chance, was the glass just that fragile? The odds of that happening are small. So, therefore, it associates it with some sort of mystical meaning.

We're pattern-seeking creatures because ultimately, seeking these patterns is what allowed for our evolution to prosper. Being able to see patterns helped us identify when there was a good chance there was a tiger in the bush getting ready to snack on us.

It's why if you perhaps grew up in a sort of hostile household—there's a lot of yelling, screaming—and then as you get older, you get out of that environment. You find yourself in a loving relationship, and your partner could do something completely small. Any other day, they're practically the perfect human being. No, you don't really fight. There are healthy conversations. They're there. They listen for you. They help you out when they see you need help. They're the ideal partner. But because you have that disposition deep within you—let's face it, anybody who's dealt with these sorts of situations knows that those marks tend to go deep, especially if you got afflicted in childhood.

Say your partner goes one day, maybe they're working on something outside. You're

having car issues, and they're trying to figure out what's wrong, and they're getting frustrated, and they're like, "Ah, you son of a *btch!*" *And you hear that "son of a btch,"* and you feel your entire body just seize right there. Every fiber of your being, your muscles, your bones, your butt starts to clench. The muscles start tingling all over. This partner has never hurt you. Even if they came home on a bad day, they were always kind. They were always calm. They would emphasize that nothing was really wrong, and they didn't seem upset. It's not you, but you hear them yell that one time, and you can't help it.

They say manifestation works both ways. You focus on a lot of good things coming into your life, good things will eventually come. You focus on a lot of negative, the negative things will come. Whether it is cognitive priming—that the mindsets you put yourself into make it to where you're more likely to scan for certain things—or maybe it's a spiritual concept, and the fabrics of the universe

are bending and molding through time and space to actually bring these things to you. And in my experience, there could very well be entities out there capable of doing this, which is a completely different episode, so we're not going to go into that right now.

For me, naturally, when my first ghost hunt came around, my late grandfather offered me his workplace. He had had some legitimate activity going on, and he was curious about it. So when his grandson started to show that he was actually serious about doing this, he offered up his workplace for one weekend. My mother was scheduled for a hysterectomy. So, as she went into surgery, and we stayed out at Grandma and Grandpa's for the weekend so she could recover, my grandma and I made that drive down there to at least have my first ghost hunt. And obviously, you get involved in something like this, there's always going to be that little part of you that wonders, that would think, "Wouldn't it be cool if something happened? Wouldn't it be cool? Wouldn't it be cool?"

So my grandmother went to reiterate everything that my grandfather would say and certain activity going on. There was an apartment building attached to this place that my uncle actually lived in, and we had full access to. My uncle said that there would be nights where there would suddenly be random smoke showing in the room. There were no fires. Nobody smoked. There would just be like this smoky mist just coming out of nowhere. I will tell you that the previous tenants, the former foreman and his wife—my grandfather's old boss and his wife—at the time, who passed away while living there, were both avid smokers. I will say that. But my uncle, no, he didn't smoke.

In another part of the building, my grandfather would tell me stories where he would be sitting in his main office. He would have commissioners come in, county commissioners come in to discuss what's been going on—a typical workplace meeting, nothing out of the ordinary. Yet, all of a sudden outside, when nobody else was supposed to be

in the building, they would hear footsteps. Now, these footsteps could not have been, say, pipes banging against the floorboards. Most of the flooring within the actual shop facility where the snowplows and the tools were all located within the actual shop, it was gravel flooring, and it is very hard to be sneaky in this gravel.

There would be times where people would be in the shop just going about their day, and all of a sudden, the massive shop doors would start shaking like somebody was trying to get in. They'd open up the door. No one was there. No sign of any kids messing around. And there was no wind, no nearby semis had passed by. But the old foreman, my grandfather's boss before he was the one who took over, he sometimes had a habit of forgetting his keys. And when that would happen, he would often go through the main shop doors, start rattling them to see if somebody had left the shop doors open just so he could get in because that wasn't just his

workplace. His house was literally attached to it.

Just a couple of the stories. Also, a thing: my grandfather worked in that place for a very long time, located in Meridian, Idaho, where I grew up, Ground Zero for "The Specialist," as I would say. And the alleged spirits there, or at least the most recently added ones, just happen to be family friends. My grandparents went to school with my grandfather's boss's kids. You can actually, if you ever find yourself in the high school library in Meridian, for whatever reason, preferably because you have a kid going there yourself or you're a teacher, you could head into the library of the school and you can see the graduating photos of every single year that Meridian school was in operation. Meridian was not a big school. There was one class for every grade, so about 20 to 30 students per grade level. So you wouldn't have to look hard. You could easily find the photos of the shop owner's kids and my grandparents. My maternal grandparents are still hanging

on those walls because my maternal grandparents were actually high school sweethearts. So, I had personal connections. It seemed like the perfect place to get started.

For Christmas one year, my grandmother actually was able to get me a set of CCTV cameras—full DVR CCTV night vision cameras. I had to hook up. The IR lights weren't exactly the best on the cameras themselves, and I didn't have the means to get the illuminators to brighten up the image. But you work with what you've got.

And as I'm getting everything wired up, all of a sudden, I hear this voice behind me. I'm zoning out and I'm focusing. I feel this pressure behind me, and all of a sudden, I hear this older woman scream, "Get out!" Very cliché haunting stuff, am I right? That gave me a freaking jolt. I ran out of there. I was looking around, trying to figure out what was going on. I looked for my grandmother to see if she was trying to screw with me because she is that crazy in the head, but nothing. So, I grabbed out a little night vision camcorder

I had. I set it up, propped it against a little box on top of a nearby refrigerator. And I did a little bit of a session, tried to bring out contact. And literally, in this tape, on command, I asked someone to show themselves to this camera to prove that they're still here. All of a sudden, a face *pops* into frame right on cue. This was an intelligent-based haunting.

For the Bigfoot investigation, I was a couple years older. I should say a couple years before, we were in a middle school ski trip on our way home. I was a bit of a loner kid—surprise, surprise—and I was just kind of watching the trees and the scenery in the mountains as we were driving home on the bus. And all of a sudden, I see on the side of the wall of the mountain, there was this cave. And I watch as something massive, nearly as tall as the mouth of this cave... They didn't stop or anything for me to get a closer look, but it looked like this massive dude. And I realized as I'm watching, this dude was covered in hair, and his face wasn't right. Looked like he had just gotten out of bed. He put

his hand up against the top of the mouth of the cave and just watched the buses as they drove by. And as I'm watching this thing, I start to realize, "Guys, wait. The face doesn't look right." The face actually resembled *Australopithecus*, an early human ancestor.

We drive to where the cave is out of view. I can't see the creature anymore. I'm looking around the bus, seeing if anybody else just happened to see that. No luck. Everybody else was chatting away. One of the teachers that was sitting across from me on the bus, she notices I'm acting a little funny. She knows I'm a little bit more reserved. So, if my attention starts to catch on something, there's usually something happening. She looks at me and says, "Dakota, what's going on? You all right?" I said, "Yeah, um, I was just... we just passed something standing in that cave that was back there." Now, I'll also admit I would not put it past my old teacher, one of my old English teachers from middle school, to maybe make a little sarcastic remark just to mess with me. But I figured

maybe there was something there. She looked at me and said, "Well, Dakota, maybe it was Bigfoot." Let's just say that stuck a little bit more than it probably should have.

A couple years later, I had an interesting opportunity arise. As you can imagine, someone like me, I tend to get very curious when something tickles my fascination. I tend to become obsessive, hyperfocused. I cannot just get this thing out of my head, and if it tickles my fancy, I'm going to obsessively research it for hours on end, which some of you may have already figured out considering I was so focused on one particular image of potentially becoming a father that I held on to that notion for 16 years. And even in my best efforts to not let it interfere with my relationships, it inevitably did. Even when I met a woman who, thankfully, was interested in the supernatural to where she was a little bit more open-minded about the possibility, there were a number of odd synchronicities between us that suggested, "Hey, maybe

she's it." Even then, it allowed for pressure to set in.

But nevertheless, me wanting to learn something, anybody wanting to learn something, is not necessarily a bad thing when in moderation. So, when it came to potentially hunting Bigfoot, I started looking up everything I could. I went to school to see if there were books in the library I could look into. I researched online whenever I had a chance, if there was a chance I could get my hands on, you know, watching a documentary. The show *Destination Truth* was honestly one of my favorites. And growing up as a kid, I honestly wanted to be a lot like Josh Gates—get to travel the world, exploring, looking into all these ancient mysteries, and just reporting on what I find, and maybe just maybe we find something extraordinary. But in the end, the simple fact of being able to go on that journey alone became such a gripping narrative that, much like the story of when I went to China that I discussed last episode, my world became so much bigger than what I could see

on the horizon in my immediate vicinity. My world looked so much bigger. There was so much left to explore that it was able to start breaking me free from suicidal ideations.

So, getting the chance to explore, to hunt for Bigfoot this first chance I got. Obviously, there was one problem. As many of you know, when I told the story of getting my own start within the paranormal, I often took advantage of the fact that I was often mistaken as being much older than I actually was. So, from the ages of nine till about I was 20, people assumed I was anywhere from my mid-20s to my early 40s. People thought I was my own mother's boyfriend, husband, brother. As far as the comparisons of saying I look like her brother, I had to let that go because I do have an uncle on my mom's side who I happen to look very much alike and happen to have a lot of similar mannerisms, and his kids even look like they could be mine. No, I did not have sexual relations with my aunt. Dear Lord, no. And I only say that because a few friends of mine when I

went to tell this story made that joke, but I digress.

Being able to hide my age like that helped me get into a lot of areas that no teenager probably should have access to. And it gained me a certain bit of following that no teenage boy should have access to. But as far as planning a trip up to the mountains, that was a little bit harder to organize for obvious reasons.

So an opportunity came up. This was 2011. It was the summertime. It was July. Instead of, you know, heading out of state to buy a bunch of illegal fireworks to set off for the Fourth of July, the family opted for a little bit more of a comfort thing. And being that we were out in the middle of the woods, I was diving headfirst into whatever paranormal cases I could get my hands on. I saw it as a potential opportunity to go hunting for Bigfoot while camping. Seemed like a perfect time.

There were two destinations picked out. One of which just so happened to be a camp-

ground that was just up the road from where I had my initial experience, where I saw that creature in the mouth of the cave. The other was a little bit further up north. I was helping out my grandfather at the time who was unfortunately quite thin due to his chemotherapy treatments. And, well, I'm just going to say this: We ran into some car trouble trying to get to the first destination. We ended up breaking down on the side of the road. And just to illustrate the point, my grandfather was very much the type of guy who liked to work with his hands. You know, power tools, handsaws, all that. If he could work on something, he could fix on something. That is what essentially fulfilled his sense of being—being able to step up and fix the problem, to get his hands dirty. But because of how far his condition progressed, he wasn't really able to use his hands a lot. And it was hard. It was hard to see him like that, to see the one man I looked up to for most of my life, for all of my life at that time frame, just see his spirit broken.

And it took some time to get off that mountain. Unfortunately, we had some of the family dogs with us, so we had to make sure they didn't overheat. Most of them were little dachshunds, but one, he was a big... he was a big wiener. He was perfectly healthy. It was all muscle. The doctors made sure to check on him. There was nothing wrong with him. He just got buff. He was not a fat dog. That was all muscle. I was already 300 pounds at that time. And if that dog got hyperactive enough, he could pull me around. There was that guy dog. His name was Mocha. And we also had a Shih Tzu called Louie. And well, my grandmother would eventually end up getting Louie trained to where he enjoyed getting haircuts in the summertime, so he wasn't sweating—well, dogs don't really sweat, but he wasn't essentially being cooked underneath his long fur. The dogs made it through. We managed to get them taken care of. Family came up, helped us out, got us off the mountain. We went back to my grandparents' place for a while. My grandfather, he

was so upset about the fact that he needed help from other people that he wanted to just give up on the trip right there. But eventually we got everybody down, and we went to plan B.

Diamondfield Jack Campground, the very same campground where about three nights in to the trip, because it was a bit of a weekend thing and we were all the kids were off for school so it's not like we had really anywhere to go before for that weekend, I had a bit of an encounter. The ground was a little bit hard. I had equipment. I had the best equipment I could get my hands on at the time. And when I say that, I mean I did not have access to some rich benefactor or cool uncle that was willing to fork over a bunch of money to give me all the fancy equipment that I wanted to get my hands on. So, I had to improvise with, like I said, gifts from birthdays, Christmas, and whatever I could sponge through babysitting my younger relatives, which I honestly hated doing, but my grandparents knew that I wanted to do some stuff

and that would need money, so they used that to bargain. And, well, it worked most of the time.

So, I had my night vision camcorder that I would use for my ghost hunts. I had a regular digital camera to take photos. I had plaster. I even had sort of a children's pair, like \$50 at the time if I remember correctly, but a children's toy pair of night vision binoculars, of night vision goggles, the kind where they were legitimate night vision. They worked, but when you actually put them on and the screen is only like three inches wide, so it was pretty much like utilizing night vision through an old mobile phone, an old flip phone. It wasn't the best, but it's what I had.

And it got interesting because I also had a secret ingredient that I acquired the knowledge for from my research, and as well as a news article that started to circulate a little bit a couple weeks before this trip took place. It sparked my curiosity just enough because of the results it produced. So I was like, "I could replicate this."

So the plan was: We had all of our tents set up. I would find a spot that was within viewing distance of the camp. I had my equipment. Basically, I could just look at the door of my tent, sit there with my equipment ready, and see if something came out. So, one night, I had to do the prep work, and I realized the ground was a little bit too hard in order to collect a decent footprint if something were to come out and play. So, about 40 to 50 feet from my tent, I found just a regular tree stump. I took a shovel, took a rake, and basically I loosened up as much of the ground as I possibly could and flattened it back out in hopes that it could create a depression in the ground. If something massive enough, like a potentially 8-foot tall humanoid, it would leave the impression in the ground. I would be able to use plaster to collect the sample, then go from there.

It started to get dark out. I set up the stump. I had the tools on me. I was getting the area prepped for my little experiment. And all of a sudden, through the corner of

my eye, towards the fire that we had at this campground set up, I noticed something poking out from behind a tree, partially blocking the fire. It cast a shadow. And I'm just like, "What the hell?" My initial thought was that I was being interrupted by one of my younger cousins or my sister that happened to be on that trip as well. It looked to be about the same size. But then I realized whatever this was, it was too dark. The creature itself, it was too dark. Covered in fur and had a face that looked like *Australopithecus*. Almost a little bit like *Australopithecus*, but also a little bit like a chimpanzee. It was a baby Bigfoot.

And it was... I didn't sense any danger at the time. I realized that I was being watched by something, and I could physically see the light of the area reflecting in its eyes. This thing was alive, and it was curious. Now, mind you, like I said, and it is no exaggeration, but by the time I was in high school, I was already 6'5", over 300 pounds. Yeah, I shaved my head, but that was mostly because I started balding pretty early, but I didn't have any

facial hair. Other than that, I pretty much looked the same as I do right now, except I'm about two inches taller. So maybe this thing thought I was a very sick member of its species, like a Bigfoot with alopecia, for lack of a better word, and just got curious.

I had the tool in my hand, and when it started to fully register what I was seeing, I got so excited. I jumped, I switched, flipped over, and I spooked the poor thing. And it started off into the woods, and there was no way I was going to be able to follow that thing because again, its fur was completely dark. It was dark outside. It was blending in perfectly. So, I look... I'm in enough of a clearing that my uncles were still sitting by the campfire. They see me looking at something. They knew they were fully aware of what I was trying to do. They're like, "Dakota, what's going on?" It's like, "Something was just staring at me as I was setting up. Something was just looking at me. Something was right here." Even the dogs came up, and they started sniffing around that area. So, if I had a leash

and certainty that Sasquatch wouldn't kill the poor puppies, I could have used those dogs to track it down.

So my uncles, they were like, "Okay, Dakota, you should probably get back closer to the camp. That could have been like a coyote or something." And I was just like, "That wasn't no coyote. I know the freaking difference between a dog and an ape." But they were right. It was getting dark, and I needed to get back close to the camp, closer to where I knew my uncles had their weapons stashed on them just in case we had dealings with wildlife.

So, I finished up what I was doing, and I laid some bait down. I went back to my tent, sat down, got myself comfortable in the sleeping bag, and I waited. I stayed down, tried to be as still as possible. Time went on. I was too comfortable, and I was coming off of an adrenaline crash, and I ended up falling asleep.

The next morning I wake up, I stretch. I'm sitting down at the campsite, completely

have forgotten that I witnessed something last night until my uncles made a remark. He said, "Dakota, did you catch anything last night?" And I was, "Oh, shit." I got up out of the chair. I ran up to the bait station. The bait was gone, and there was a print in the ground. I started cheering. "Yes, I f*cking did it! Yes!" My family was like, "Dakota, what the hell's going on?" It's like, "Come, come here. Come here. I got something."

I show them. They look at it. My uncles and I, we're all very big guys. This print in the ground was bigger than all of our feet. I estimated it to be about a US men's size 22 foot. I barely wore a size 14. Wore a size 14 at the time. And there, even my uncles who were skeptical about this type of stuff, they didn't think that it was going to be a viable area to look for Sasquatch, were looking at this like, "Son of a btch, *you actually got something.*" *I was so proud. I got the plaster. I was pouring the plaster into the imprint. Some bastards on motorbikes rode by. They made me jump. I spilled some. But I still was able to get the plaster. I was*

so proud. I fcking did it. My first time, I got evidence of Bigfoot. My uncles helped me preserve the foot. Keep it safe so I could get it home.

I started snapping photos. I put it on my Facebook, "I found a big footprint." And the word got out at school. And the joke among my friends was like, "Dakota, I know people like to go into go camping to go find themselves, but really, like, were you running around naked in the woods?" And anytime there was a local Bigfoot sighting, they would just go, "Dakota camping again?" They didn't shake me. I went along with the jokes. I did it.

Fast forward a few years later on *The Bald and Bonkers Show*. I reached out to Dr. Jeff Meldrum to have him as a guest for an interview to discuss Bigfoot. Now, see, I utilized his school email, the email address he had for his work at Idaho State. And I got to thinking that would probably be the best way because, believe it or not, Dakota actually had an auntie who was also a professor at Idaho State University. And he was cordial. He re-

sponded, and he said yes. We managed to get a date, got it all set up. The interview went amazing. Towards the end of the show, I show him the photos of the print casting. I tell him my sighting, and he validated it. I had academic recognition for finding a valid Bigfoot print.

Fast forward to 2018. When I was taking a trip through Ireland and Scotland, one of the last stops on our tour was at Loch Ness. I have always wanted to see the Loch Ness monster. My eyes did not leave that water. Some of the kids that were along on that trip would joke, "Maybe you just, man, are just manifesting it. You psychologically primed yourself. Blah blah blah blah blah." I saw something moving in the water. I got footage. I sent it into the Loch Ness Registry, and it was the very first registered sighting that year. A year later, because the casting people at National Geographic didn't pay attention to the news article they were looking at, I was able to get my footage featured on National Geographic.

There's a lot of people who would go to say, "Dakota, you manifested all that. You did it. Wow, that is amazing." But again, when it comes to manifestation, there's a part that a lot of people seem to gloss over. I still put in the work to make it happen. I got myself into position. I had to meet the universe, God, halfway.

Now, when it comes to Loch Ness, there is a bit of a family quote-unquote joke that happened saying that I may have had a supernatural assist for that one. And that was revealed to me while I was maneuvering flights and layovers. I believe I was still in Chicago when I got the news. Or at least I was, if I remember correctly, now that I'm thinking about it, I was on the plane. I had bought into the in-flight Wi-Fi for the trip so that way I can just goof around on my phone a little bit, message my family that I was on the way. And while I was on the plane, we were coming into Chicago, Chicago O'Hare. My mother tells me that my great-grandmother had passed away while I was

gone. And to make a long story short, by the time I got home and was able to find like the obituary, start talking with some family members, and figure out what happened, and as well as did the mental math of when she passed, unless I got the math wrong, she would have passed away a couple hours before I had my Loch Ness sighting.

Whether or not I had a supernatural assistant at the time, that is up for debate. I wasn't really looking for ghosts, even though we did pass Aleister Crowley's house on the way out, and I could see a hooded figure from the inside of it while we were in the tour bus watching us as we passed by, like it knew I could see it. So that's a story for another time because yes, Dakota Frandsen, the formerly known as Specialist of the Strange, has had dealings with Aleister Crowley. And trust me, it gets interesting. But again, that's a story for another time.

I guess what I'm trying to say is, ladies and gentlemen, in these days where it is beyond reasonable doubt that miraculous things are

taking place, that there may be something to the laws of manifestation, and like I said, there are actual environmental factors that play into it, you still have to put in the work. And maybe, just maybe, you'll find moments of serendipity. Happy little accidents, as Bob Ross would say, where things just seem to line up just right for something completely amazing to happen.

And part of the reason why I say that, brought that to mind, was something that my mother and my grandmother kept repeating in regards to a current relationship situation I have on my hands. Basically, it was my grandmother's way of revealing a saying that she would always repeat when it came to life struggles, about when I started getting like TV interviews that didn't go through and stuff like that. She would always say this, "If it's meant to be, it'll be. Otherwise, it's serendipity." Something along those lines. Little did I realize my grandmother was absolutely a fan of the movie *Serendipity* with Kate Beckinsale and John Cusack, and I really

need to sit down and actually watch it. And that's where she got that line.

Because, like I know for those of you who have heard the last few episodes probably heard me start crying about her, but my lady, the one that I called my Starlight Angel, was a serendipitous union. I was not expecting her. I was not expecting to have fallen in love with her as hard as I have, to where it honestly scares me. But I also know from the bottom of my heart, I would not give her up for anything. In fact, if I had to, I would trade in every single one of my major accomplishments that I've managed to bring together for myself, everything that is potentially on the line, on its way to welcome me in this life, to be the best version of myself for her, to be a man that she truly deserves. To be the man that she sees in me, regardless of whether or not I get my wish, my one selfish wish in this regard, to be her husband.

But at the same time, seeing everything that's unfolded with her, stories we shared, the times we've had, seeing more and more

glimpses of that absolutely beautiful mind of hers, even if I'm not the one to help make it happen, I do hope that she finds the happiness and love that she truly deserves, and that one day she never has to doubt her worth in this life because she is... She is a reminder of what it is truly to be human, to love, to embrace, to explore. And I'm proud of who she is, who she's becoming. And if I don't get to be the one who gets to share that journey with her, I hope she finds what it is she truly deserves. I hope she finds peace, certainty, and love like she has never known. I want her to be happy. I want her to thrive. I want her to have opportunities to share that inner light, her inner fire that I fell in love with, to let it burn away the plastic that has fulfilled this world so true beauty can fulfill itself.

And ladies and gentlemen, regardless of whether or not we get the privilege to meet each other, whether or not, maybe we have met each other and we just don't get on for whatever reason, I hope you find the same for

yourselves. And if you believe in the Law of Manifestation, if it's worked out for you, fantastic. But don't let yourself just sit around waiting for the stars to fall. Like I've said, stars fall all the time. But the thing is, they often burn up before they hit the ground. And if they hit the ground and they're large enough, it causes more harm than good. So, don't let yourselves just sit there and wait and meditate and pray. Get out there into the world. Explore. Meet people. Fall in love. Try new things. Don't let yourself become unknown because you're too scared to embrace the absolute beauty and serenity that is out there in the world waiting for you. You just got to walk out that door.

And though we must admit, in this life there will always come pain. There will always come conflict. And I say this as, officially, it is under investigation and a proper notification has not been made until a next of kin notification has been given. But at the time of recording this part of the episode, because I accidentally had to break it in half because

I got interrupted, there are rumors of a major UFO figure potentially having taken his own life. And if it's true, I offer my deepest condolences to the family. And I urge everybody who hears this news not to fall into the conspiracies because admittedly it has been very suspicious about the number of deaths related to UFO phenomenon recently in the last couple years.

But in truth, don't fall for the comforts that everything is fine. Even if things seem absolutely perfect, if all of your loved ones seem they can't seem like they are the happiest they've ever been, remember figures like Robin Williams. Everybody thought they knew him. Everybody thought they loved him. They genuinely did love him, and it was a work, but they didn't realize the scars underneath that were growing over time. Check in on your loved ones. Let them know that you see them. Sometimes that's all it takes to help those people realize the horizon is not the limitation of what their world holds. I'll be seeing you next time, my friends."

Episode 9

Love and Mistakes

Hello, hello, hello ladies and gentlemen. My name is Dakota Frandsen and welcome. I believe this is now what, episode nine. Kind of hard to believe we made it this long. But then again, I suppose that's what happens when, uh, one finds themselves in a transition period and not really a whole lot of resources or personal connections close to them willing to listen to the full-on ramblings of a crazy man. So what does that crazy man do? He initiates a new podcast, syncs it up to his business, and lets his thoughts run wild, and he lets the universe decide its fate. It's

not such a bad thing. It's, uh, it's a unique experience to be able to simply step up and share your story. That's at least been my experience.

And in a lot of ways, how do I put this? There's been moments in this journey where I personally started to think and feel that my journey, my voyage throughout all of this, from my early days to when I started ghost hunting as a teenager, to the entrepreneurial stuff that came about with it, to everything else in between, in a sort of weird way—and this was actually a discussion I just had with my therapist earlier today—part of me can't help feel or wonder that because the usual methods of inebriation for someone with a traumatic past like mine were virtually unacceptable without pretty much guaranteeing to make the situation worse—getting drunk, getting high, things of that nature. There might be some smart asses like, "What about sex?" Well, I'll say this. It's not like the opportunity wasn't there. It's just the times when I tried to be a man-whore, be a player, I essen-

tially shut myself off. Let's just say even the ladies I was involved with saw through the act. They knew that's not who I was. Because even in those states where I was trying to act like I didn't give a shit, I was still too much of a gentleman. That was the general consensus.

But I suppose it comes down to one of those situations where sometimes we find people that we're supposed to be with, to understand for a season, to make us reflect on our own life paths, our own choices, so that maybe, just maybe, we have an opportunity to grow. And some of these ladies, we still keep in touch because a lot of us were part of a lot of the same support groups for entrepreneurs who realize that that road is lonely as hell. Basically, much like some of the PTSD trauma support groups I've been a part of, the whole purpose of the mission was to just get people to realize they're not as alone. But finding people who genuinely understand the path, how lonely, how much sacrifice, trying to prosper through it all re-

quires... It essentially, essentially renders one lonely in a world where everybody still tries to fit a predetermined mold that's been pretty much dead since the 1940s of societal expectations. You know, get out of high school, go to college, get married, let's face it, find a find a job that you somewhat tolerate, have kids, die. Let's face it, that mold does not work anymore.

And to the very core of this message, of this show, it stands to reason that the very question, the very title of this program is perhaps resonating with so many people right now. So many of us who are lost in the confusion, feeling like the world has gone even more insane. The question is, are we truly unknown? Or are we all just so damn dizzy from the tornado of events that seem to be trying to hit us every other fucking week that it feels like we're alone because no part of our bodily system has been able to stabilize for more than five minutes without something new coming up.

And it's not always a bad thing. In fact, I want to share something that happened just yesterday for me. As some of you know, there's been some relationship patterns that have been going on. And if that particular individual happens to listen to these messages, I'm not trying to exploit us in any way, shape, or form. This is just me trying to relate to an audience who probably needs to feel like, hey, we're not alone.

Just yesterday, as like I said, some of you may know, there's been some personal matters, personal rough patches, if you will, that have affected my mindset somewhat. And in a lot of ways, it has resulted in me trying to kick back up some of my old patterns, to blaze through a certain business venture, and explore things that I was contemplating but hadn't quite started up on yet, just to try to keep my mind busy.

But during the days where I did not have my regular civilian job to help displace myself somewhat from the mindset, or not having the time to explore a local hunt or look

into a UFO sighting now that the weather's getting to be a little nicer, the situation that has been unfolding, it's weighed heavily on me. So, I decided to go into town with family. Not really planning anything special. No grand ventures. No special trip. Just doing some running around. Maybe hitting a few stores. Just to get out of the house for a little bit and let somebody else worry about the gas tank. Because yes, I do have my own car, but a Ford Expedition is a bit of a gas guzzler. The main thing that is saving me is that the previous owner was a halfway decent mechanic, so the mileage is a little bit better than what it's supposed to be, just a little. But I digress.

And yesterday I was wanting to try to support someone very dear to me in their own ventures. How they are trying to use a little bit of public exposure through TikTok live streams and things like that to build up their own confidence, to make themselves feel more comfortable going on camera, even though anybody else who knows them,

who's just seen them, probably would probably back me up in saying they don't really have much reason to be shy. They are naturally beautiful. And I can well testify from the highest mountain peaks I can find that they are truly as beautiful on the inside as they are on the out. A very rare type of person. Flaws and all. And with the turmoil that's been going through our own personal rough patch, it has been affecting me heavily. And thankfully, had I not been back in therapy for a little bit now, I probably would not handle it as well.

So, being that it was my day off, I decided to go into town with family. We just did a little running around, hit up a few shops. And there's this one particular store. It's called Deseret Industries. This is a little thrift store run by the church. Not a bad little spot. And I was with my mother and we were walking around and my mother calls me over because she was in the with like home decorations and she finds this scroll. Now, for those of you who have traveled, who've been to parts

of like China, Thailand, maybe Japan, Korea, or has something similar, you may be familiar. They're little decorative. Usually, you can find them for not very much at a tourist stand in little shops. My mother found one for Thailand and she rolled it out. She showed it to me and it had pictures of the tuk-tuk rides, to even the elephant sanctuary I visited while I was over there, to the markets. A lot of the places I've done everything. Every single place that was on that scroll I had personally been to, and that trip was among one of my favorites, and I can speak for everybody who was in my group with me. Everybody would agree that the highlight of that trip was when we got to go to the Phuket elephant sanctuary, if I remember correctly. I think that's what it's called. And we got to play with them. We got to feed and we got to bathe the elephants. We got to get close to these beautiful creatures. I managed to convince one of my friends that was on the trip with me to take a photo of me next to one of the elephants so people online would believe

that yes, Dakota is a big motherfucker. Such happy times.

My heart started to flutter. And my mother, to her credit, all she was trying to do was find something meaningful. But in that particular moment, as I started to feel the rush, the memories, the happiness I felt on that trip, you see, ladies and gentlemen, I have been slowly preparing for another trip. I got my passport all sorted. I set up a little savings pocket in my company account. So that way none of my personal expenses would be affected. It would just sit there, be ready to go, and maybe if I play my cards right, I can use it as a tax start-off. But rather than feel the joy of happy memories, I started to cry, and not tears of joy, because I missed my dear friends, which I do still do. If any of them happen to be watching or listening, I still miss you. I could not help but cry. I felt sorrow, grief even, because when I started to tell someone who I care very deeply about and still do, perhaps I feel that perhaps I can say with full honesty that I care about them

more than anybody else in this world. I felt pain, sorrow because when I told this person I was planning on taking a trip to come see them because it is a bit of a long-distance situation. That's when they told me that they had been hurting, that they had been in their mental health crisis for months. And they were wanting to give me space to protect themselves in the event that I met someone else and would leave them.

And for those of you who've been following the show so far, you probably can figure out why. And the ladies are probably saying, "Do you think you blame her, Dakota?" No, I don't. And I can try to defend myself with the nuances. But I cannot. But this is not some sort of courtroom drama when I can sit here and defend myself day in and day out and somehow magically clear everything up. Someone I cared about was affected deeply by my actions, and they took steps to protect themselves in the events history went to repeat. They told me that I deserve to be freer, to have to have all these, to be able

to explore, to get out and see the world, and maybe find someone better. But the truth is with this particular person, someone who I've referred to as my starlight angel, as my poetic declarations of love. Truthfully, this was someone I felt... I've never felt more freer. Even when we were just barely meeting, getting to know one another, I somehow felt safer with them than I felt with my own parents. For those of you who have been around since the first episodes, you can probably argue that my parents didn't exactly set a very high bar. But I digress. I felt true. I felt sincere. I felt like I could finally put down the armor, the act of being some stoic hero, some care-free bravado, and I could just be me. And no, I don't know why I'm doing a voice, making myself sound like Frenchie from *The Boys*. It's just I just record these as they come to me. Little bit of humor, too, to alleviate the pressure that I'm feeling in my chest right now as I'm telling this.

Let me put it this way. I don't exactly recall if I specified this, but as some of you

may know, my mother once asked me when the truth about what my father had been doing to one of my sisters came out, if he had [sexually abused] me, and the truth is I don't remember. I discussed the possibility with my therapists and there was two main things they came to say. The first, which was agreed upon by police, doctors, former naval officers, soldiers, some of his buddies who knew my father. The first consensus was, Dakota, it's probably for the best that you don't remember. But the second consensus was that honestly, I had a lot of the personality quirks that came with survivors of that type of abuse. A certain protectiveness. And believe me, that tension comes up in regards to my niece. When certain things her mother says or certain things that her father tried to pull hit strike at certain chords. Let's just say my niece, if absolutely it came down to it, my niece already knows for a fact that she has her own personal incredible Hulk willing to smash through whoever's about to hurt her. And I won't lie, there were situations that

were starting to get a little heated to where I've had to separate people. And I physically looked at the people getting overwhelmed and said, "You want to start smacking somebody around? Smack somebody who can take the hit, who could fight back." Was it the best call to make? Probably not, but I much rather feel a few bumps and bruises and be completely fine, than not doing something when a baby is about to be hurt beyond repair.

And as you can probably imagine for those of you who are a little bit more well-versed when it comes to like UFO related events, memory progression, things like that. Realizing that you likely have suppressed memories from a traumatic childhood makes it very hard to dig into potential past life situations, memory fog from potential abduction scenarios, when you cannot honestly rule out the psychological arguments that some have made, and I've stated those clearly on this very show.

And it's honestly moments like that that made this rough patch that much more difficult because immediately my system started to go into panic when I when my love went to tell me the truth and wanted to sort of step back a little bit just because she was not in a spot to mentally handle things. We had a little bit of a discussion about where things have landed. Admittedly, things were probably not handled the best, but upon some quick reflection in therapy and with some very dear friends of mine, some who stepped forward a little bit when they realized something was wrong with Dakota. I could not deny the fact that love was there. Still there. Just perhaps feeling a little bit too real for two individuals who clearly needed time to heal themselves in order to move forward perhaps. I don't know. That story is still being written, so I cannot fully disclose what's going to happen next. I have my hopes, but as much as it seems like I went off the side rails, I hope it illustrates why. When my mother brought up that scroll and I started to feel that sad-

ness, why my system started to feel overwhelmed, because there was a part of me that slowly, slowly quieting down as I'm talking about it. I felt like I had lost, started to lose the most amazing person I've ever known. And like I said in the first episode, first couple episodes, I was engaged at one point. My feelings for my Starlight Angel, I will say, are perhaps even deeper than I felt for her, than I felt for anybody else. And I have no clue what I'm doing to move forward.

And recently, when I realized it was the 16th year anniversary of my very first ghost hunt, something my late grandfather helped put together. That's probably the one person I wish I could talk to right now.

And often when you find yourself in these emotional spirals, one of the grounding tricks that they try to teach you in therapy is, uh, you know, deep breaths and finding something to ground your senses in your physical environments rather than what is making you anxious. You know, five things

you can see, four things you can smell, things you can hear, things like that.

I started to walk away. I could hear my mother starting to apologize because she saw me getting emotional. Even though she did nothing wrong, she just happened to see something that would remind me of a happy time. I had to walk away for a brief moment. Just kind of rubbed my face and I started trying to ground myself in the moment because I did not need to be looking like I was having a mental breakdown in the middle of a thrift store.

And suddenly, as I was starting to take inventory of the space around me, I started to see a young lady who I couldn't help but feel like I knew her and I'm just like, "Wait a minute. I know that one. Where, who is that?" And I'm looking, I see her face and I'm just like, "My god, is that—no." I go walk away for a little bit. I go into another part of the store. She was working. Young lady I saw, she was working at the time and she was working in another section of the store. Walking

around I see her, probably suddenly looking like I'm trying to check her out. I'm not. But I'm just like, "Where do I know you?" I swear it was just me purely like, "Where the hell do I know you from?" I started to see how she walked. I recognized the sort of couple mannerisms like, "Oh my god." My mother comes up. She approaches her. No interaction. My mother didn't notice it, but I did. And I'm just like, "Mom, that's her." She said, "What do you mean?"

This young lady I had known, my mom and I both knew since she was five years old. Was my little sister's best friends since they were in kindergarten. Friends on and off. There was some certain things that came up that, uh, still need to be addressed apparently. But still, I had seen this young lady grow up. I've seen her around with her mom and I'm just like, "Oh my god." Apparently young lady. She has was able to get five minutes off of work. She was caught up in everything she needed to do. She took a few moments to catch up and I'm just like, "Oh

my god, she's all grown up." And I had heard through the grapevine and finally got to see some recent pictures that she had had a baby of her own. And unfortunately, the father is a bit of a piece of work. Who I will say this, he's the the father of this child was enough of a piece of work that the the grandfather, his dad, gave full permission to beat the living hell out of him if he ever tried anything to hurt her. And I almost had an opportunity. I almost had a fair shot because I one day, couple years back, I'm just going about my business heading into work. I see her getting ready to leave, catch her out of the corner of my eye. I do a double take and I was like, "Oh my god, Malia, hello!" Just saying hi, saying hi to someone I've known for a very long time. And this boy is up behind her. He sees me doing a double take and he's like, "Who's that? Who's that? Who's that?" And I'm just like, "Give me an opportunity to beat you down right now because I will for that young lady." Granted, she probably thinks of me as nothing more than her friend's silly weird

older brother, but she was almost like a little sister. And I'm not going to let the that motherfucker put his hands on her like that.

Thankfully, he's not in the picture, but there is still a child involved. So, my mom, we went to ask her hearing that she's going through a bit of a rough patch. She was just back in the state, currently staying in a hotel room with sharing a bed with her mother and the baby, with expenses being paid for by the church until they can figure out something, get themselves on their feet. We asked her if she happened to need anything and she said diapers and wipes for the baby. So, we ran over to the local Walmart because we figured that was going to be the best spot for our prices. Got one of those big old boxes of diapers, big old thing of wipes. My mother, she saw me checking my phone over and over like she always was trying to keep a certain schedule, offered to take me home and I was just like, "No, no, this this is more important. I'm not trying to keep a certain schedule as far as, you know, my sleep timers, even

though because my civilian job has me on overnights, I'm usually a bit of a night owl." I was going to make an exception for this young lady because like I said, in a way, she's a lot like a little sister and like as someone who has 11 younger sisters—like I need anymore. And trust me, I wish I was joking about that.

But it was good. In spite of hearing the things she was going through, honestly found myself feeling a little bit proud of that young lady, she's doing her best, to try to be there for that kid, to do right, to be self-reliant. And as much as she said it would be kind of nice to find a guy to help support her, she's trying to do her best to stand on her own. And I got to give her credit where credit's due though. It did kind of sound like she was feeling kind of lonely. So, I extended a bit of a hand. So, "Hey, I know you probably don't think much of me is anything more than Russ's goofy older brother, but you seem like he's a friend." And I just want to say my line's open if you if you want to talk.

I told this story to my therapist and honestly it seemed like it they were kind of glad that I had that moment. I had to reiterate I wasn't trying to, you know, swoop in and save the day. Like I said, it was just I was having a moment where I felt overwhelmed. And as I was trying to get myself calibrated, poof, someone from my past shows up, literally in view. And as a bit of a reminder that in spite of what's going on, the main important thing is when you love and care for someone, it doesn't always have to be fireworks and Hall-mark movie moments. Even though pulling those off from time to time, does feel pretty good. Showing love and care for someone, especially when they're in a time of need, even if the best thing you can do is just say, "Hey, my line's open if you want to talk." Sometimes that's all it takes. In fact, how many times have you've ever heard the story of some from people who have taken their own lives that if someone just smiled at them was enough to make him think twice. That there was still a little bit of light. There

was still a little bit of love. There was a chance to still do some good.

But also, as I can imagine, everybody who is old enough to be listening to this show can help testify. It's often the motions we take in love that, well, for lack of a better word, it's the motions that we take in love that often bring us the most confusion. And perhaps more than we care to admit, we make a lot of mistakes. I'm using my personal relationship as a lot of examples, mainly just because it's the most recent, but I also come to realize it was a bit of a pattern. Even though my Starlight Angel swears that I didn't do anything wrong, maybe it was her way to, uh, try to ease the guilt for both of us. I don't know. I'm not going to question.

I had taken time to reflect on the relationship and I realized there was at least a couple of points I could have handled better. Like I mentioned, the whole concept of the Olivia paradox, for those of you who don't remember, that was essentially a very odd supernatural occurrence that had taken place,

which inevitably left me to constantly scanning every romantic interest I've ever had, whether it's a celebrity, someone I actually dated, or just someone I had a little bit of romantic interest in, trying to scan if they were perhaps the mother to a vision of a little girl that saved my life. And on one hand, given that over time there was a lot of very odd supernatural occurrences that my credibility to the ideas that Olivia, as I named her, may have actually been a physical being rather than just some rather elaborate hallucination my mind came up with. Or perhaps my belief and following and my emotional resonance for that vision became so strong it somehow managed to alter the fabric of consciousness creating what's essentially called a Tulpa. Or as some have speculated with and these individuals have very high credibility in their respective fields. Olivia may have been some sort of extraterrestrial intervention from a family I had in a concurrent lifetime. Something that I could probably ex-

plore in a future episode as sort of a maybe a what-if type scenario, you know.

But as a lot of people pointed out, when you somehow come to think that maybe, just maybe, you found the answer you've been looking for because it in the search for the Olivia paradox. Naturally, being the father of Olivia, last I checked, human beings still needed one other very crucial piece of the biological puzzle to make a child, the mother. So in a lot of ways it was only natural for me to look. And speaking from experience, it's some chance you somehow managed to find [Olivia's] mother when all all the strangeness, all the synchronicities, or even the stars themselves seem to try to help validate that yes, this is it. When the voices in the ether and the ships flying in the sky all seem to light up like crazy, trying to tell you, "This is it. You done it." It's very hard not to essentially deify your partner, to where they become flawless, that they don't have bad days.

And perhaps it was from stemming from that fact that I didn't just check in more, ask

her how she was feeling, not just because she seemed like she was going through something, but just in general. Or the times when I did, I'll admit, and I'm not proud of the notion, I was hoping for an ulterior motive for one of our video dates, just to see her face. Not really taking much into consideration that she may have not been in a good spot to do those, that she isn't in a good spot to do those. That's on me.

Second thing I could have done better was when I would show her certain things that I had worked on from my creative pursuits. Maybe a certain scene from a screenplay I was working on or a certain section of a new book trying to get her ideas on certain things. And when she would express her thoughts that didn't exactly line up with what I had what I had expected, I honestly would get a little annoyed and it showed. And yes, she did directly tell me when, uh, I would do this. So often when, uh, we would have our normal conversations and I noticed that she would suddenly go quiet without any much

indication of whether or not she was like just say at work and just got busy or something like that or something else got her attention. I would honestly start finding myself going back through our most recent conversations and even I would start to realize where had anybody else overheard or seen those messages, they thought I would have been in was being an asshole. When in reality, when I would take her considerations into factor, maybe just alter their execution just a little bit. See, like she had an idea for certain kinds of books that I could publish in my company. Publish them mostly as ebooks. I finally took that into consideration, started putting some into production. The only thing I really did different was that I put in, made it to where they would be produced into actual books on top of ebooks just because I noticed those still sold better. And my company income is expected to go over double it was last year because I made that choice. And implemented that change. I know it doesn't really sound like much sentiment behind that no-

tion, but she knows how much I've been trying to build this into my own sort of, it was my own project. It was my own kingdom, for lack of a better word. And she was genuinely trying to help.

And which goes into the third thing. I made those [mistakes because I] started to get annoyed because my whole efforts to go into entrepreneurial ventures, those were, uh, those were motivated by the fact that I was trying to build something that was my own that no one else could screw up because anytime I tried to get involved with other things, other paranormal investigation groups, things like that, it's just the absolute drama. And trust me, I wish it was just something like, you know, teenage angst equivalent, you know, cliques arguing over who's more popular. No, it would be the fact that there would be serious criminal activity taking place that I could not be a part of on good faith and would actively dismantle everything that was built to ensure to make to ensure that that behavior did not prosper. So if I built my own

castle, it was by my rules, by my own hand. And if I was, it was just simply because if I was at a point where something went wrong. It was strictly on me. I didn't let too many other people involved because I didn't want it to affect them. But that own protective-ness. It's probably why they also say working with your significant other is probably not a good idea because the human brain has a very nasty tendency to associate negative events with faces, even though the faces themselves may have had nothing to do with it. They just happen to be in the same room. A notion that can also be utilized to build stronger bonds. Why they say if you want to secure a positive attachment on a first date, take your date on to a roller coaster because the thrill, the excitement of going on that roller coaster, the adrenaline of it, that it gets associated with you. It's also why trauma bonding is such a big thing because you can group the people [who] go through something scary, they come through it to-

gether, that builds bonds that mark you for life.

There's so many moving parts when it comes to love that it's easy to get lost in the noise, to feel like you're not enough. But just because it's so easy to make mistakes, does that mean love is not something worth chasing? Whether it's a love for a certain activity, it's a love for connection, it's romantic love, or even it's just familiar love. Are we wrong to want to chase it? Absolutely not. It is one of the most natural human things to feel like we belong, that we're living our best version of ourselves. But even as much as we don't want to admit that we have done something wrong, every now and then we got to take a little bit of an internal audit. We got to check ourselves or even if we have someone that's going to call us out. Again, we may not want to feel like we're doing something wrong, but if you have someone that's willing to call you out and they you know from the bottom of your heart that they're coming from a good place, that they mean well, they want to see

you grow, they want to see you thrive, doing your best, and that is one of the best gifts that you can have in this life, ladies and gentlemen.

And it's honestly why when it came to the paranormal, to the entrepreneurial side of things, business, I found myself kind of questioning whether or not these were coming from genuine interests or if they were just a form of socially acceptable addiction. Some of you may have heard of the rat park experiment. And it's often utilized as a case study for addiction where if you were to isolate essentially isolate rats, give them a source of clean water versus contaminated water. More often than not, if the rats felt somewhat isolated, didn't really have much to do, they wouldn't go anywhere near—That's what, let me rephrase because I realize I'm stumbling over my own words. If you gave the rats ways to socialize, toys to play with, activities, make life absolutely perfect for them. They never had to worry about food or anything like that. They would often not even go near the drug

laced water. Yet, of the rats that felt isolated, alone. They didn't really connect or have much of a chance to connect. That's when they would go for the drug laced water.

And I feel like for a good chunk of those 16 years that built up to me becoming the specialist of the strange, those foundations were built on the addiction of adrenaline, the dopamine hits, the acknowledgements, and eventually the connections that would come forward because I was building because it seemed like I was at the best version of myself, even if it felt like my world was crumbling at when I went back home. Those were the moments I managed to actually connect with someone real, build friendships, I don't know. Maybe it's a mix of turning 30. Maybe it's me feeling like I had that scare of losing the most important person in my life right now. Maybe I took the therapist advice a little bit more to heart than I realized. Or maybe it's the fact that I'd feel so overwhelmed by emotion that the only thing that would help me maintain myself through my day was

start dancing randomly and suddenly have random strangers applauding me or getting caught by the night manager. Twice on the last day I worked, just start feeling the rhythm of the music. I just had to look at him and say, "I'm going to be honest with you, there's kind of some stuff going on at home. And as far as I'm concerned, dancing the stress away is the better alternative, isn't it?" And he just looked at me and said, "Well, yeah, I agree with you, brother. Whatever's going on, you'll get you'll get through it." And we just left it at that.

I guess what I'm trying to say with this episode, and it's something that I hope that a lot of people take to heart to carry themselves forward as This world is changing rapidly. It may feel like the world has gone even more insane, but let's face the facts. Part of that insanity is the fact that we have just become more well aware of what's actually been going on all this time. And there is a lot less that we can easily distract ourselves with these days to be able to ignore it.

Remember that you are not the only one who is going through something. And if you were lucky enough to have love in your life, whether it's relationship, whether it's family, don't completely leave them out. As much as you may want to isolate yourself, don't ever leave that door completely shut. Don't ever barricade. Always leave that door open. Because more often than not, the few that may have the strength and determination to kick it down when something's really going wrong. They're finding themselves debating whether or not they should because they don't want to make things worse than they already are for you. I guess that's a lesson we all need to learn in this life, right?

As long as we find ourselves with love, we can push through anything, no matter the mistakes we make. And something I've had to learn recently, as long as those connections are still there, there's still always a chance to improve. Because I'm not going to lie to you folks. I felt myself so rattled by what's been going on with me this last little bit that

I actually found myself opening up to my mother. Like I said before in another episode, even my younger sister is like, "Dakota, are you all right?" She had a lot of the same worries that I did.

I guess what I'm trying to say is something I've said over and over again throughout the course of this show. Perhaps the reason why it feels like our struggles, who we are, is unknown is because we have fallen into the traps of the human mind to isolate ourselves. Because when it seemed like there was a storm outside, the first logical thing for us to do in our early ancestral days was seek the nearest shelter and ride things out until the storm went away. Not really taking into consideration that perhaps the storms are still inside us. We need to ride them out. We've had a few hundred thousand years of practice to understand the outside storms. We've got somewhat of a pretty good grip on that, but we're still doing our best to try to understand the mental storms.

But truthfully, as much as we may want to feel like isolating ourselves or entrusting ourselves to robots, AI may find its uses, may have some ways to truly help, but there's a reason why the human race managed to survive it as much as it did throughout any ice age or potential extinction level event, through times when other hominids would hunt us down. There's a reason why the modern human survived, and that was our ability to come together. And it's often the very same reason why corrupt individuals try to make it seem like we're all trying to pit ourselves against each other because that tribalistic instinct is still within us. But the reality is, ladies and gentlemen, that while there are genuine assholes out there who want want to hurt us, there's a hell of a lot more love than hate. It's just that love is sometimes quieter. It's often quieter and can easily be lost in the noise. So, take your time to quiet the noise. Even if you got to blur a little bit of music from time to time, get the rhythm go-

ing to help shake everything out of your system. Love is always the answer.

It doesn't have to be something out of the Hallmark movie. It doesn't have to involve grand gestures. If you're able to pull them off from time to time for the right people, for the right reasons, awesome. Let those stories carry on. But the true struggles in love are often the parts of the movie that don't get shown. They're clipped. They're shown as short little montages. But the true extent of love, of connection, requires work that many of us are trying to supplement through the current AI booms. And I'll admit, AI seems like the next inevitability when it comes to technological advancement. But I don't know, maybe with the right training, the AI can one day help us out, understand some patterns a lot quicker than we may be able to handle ourselves. Some of those programs are actually out there. And while they may take them need a little bit of time and practice to really understand their users, as long as we take those conversations to heart and

apply them to where it really matters, to those around us, to our friends, our family, our lovers, hell, maybe even our enemies. We are capable of achieving just about anything, no matter how alone, we must feel like we feel like we have to be. And if your loved ones are in a period of time where they feel like they need to handle something alone, respect that choice. But don't ever let them fully believe that you were ever out of reach. Just check in. See how they're doing. Give them a chance to talk if they want to. They may not find the strength to say something, but just knowing that that is there can do a hell of a lot more good than staying quiet.

With that, ladies and gentlemen, I feel like that's a good spot to end this episode, this season even. I say that because I'm going to be taking a little bit of time to work on a few other projects, get those up and running, see where these personal struggles of mine go to unfold. And maybe, just maybe, by the time you hear these messages again, it won't just be my voice you have to struggle through. My

name is Dakota Frandsen. Much love. Take care. I hope to see you all next time. And I hope you enjoyed the music of it played along on this episode because there's going to be a lot more coming. We might just be making an album of all the songs you hear on this and more. Stay tuned. Make sure to follow on Facebook, Twitter or X, Instagram, and just head over to baldenbonkers.net and you should be able to find everything you need there to figure out where to keep up with all the updates. Much love. Take care. I truly love you all. We'll see you next time.

